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Pro-life groups skeptical of government's reproductive technologies legislation

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES, Ont. — The subject of new reproductive technologies (NRTs) is a controversial one which has generated questions about the ethics and consequences of using those technologies to deal with infertility, and for genetic experiments. This summer, the

federal government introduced legislation to ban 13 practices related to NRTs. But Christians in the pro-life movement are critical of the legislation, which they feel does not go far enough.

If approved by Parliament, the government's Human Reproductive and Genetic Technologies Act will prohibit practices such

as:

- sex selection for non-medical purposes;
- buying and selling of eggs, sperm and embryos;
- cloning of human embryos;
- creation of animal-human hybrids;
- retrieval of sperm or eggs from cadavers or fetuses for fertiliza-

tion and implantation;

- commercial "surrogacy" arrangements;
- research on human embryos later than 14 days after conception;
- creation of embryos for research purposes only.

As a rationale for prohibiting these practices, Health Canada

states in a news release that they "pose serious risks to human health and safety. They include practices that commercialize reproduction and are contrary to the principles of human dignity, respect for life and protection of the vulnerable."

Many of the new recommendations
See GOVERNMENT p. 2...

1400 CRC boys camp in Alberta

Calvinist Cadets form largest wilderness camp of its kind in North America

Robert De Jonge

KAMP KANANASKIS, Alta. — It was a true wilderness camp: one afternoon the skills of knot-tying and lashing were put to the test as each cadre (group of two counsellors and 10 boys) constructed a shelter that would be their home for a week. No nails, no flat boards — just poles, recyclable plastic and rope to hold it all together. The primary concern was: Will this shelter provide protection from the elements? But that didn't

keep the boys from using a little extra creativity. The standard A-frame style shelter was often modified with additional poles to make it taller; accommodating "lofts" to stow gear, or even for extra sleeping space on a second floor.

As for dinner, an open wood fire (no gas or propane stoves allowed) was at the hub of culinary activity. Basic ingredients — chicken, potatoes, carrots, bread, butter and peaches — were supplied by the staff, but

whether the end product was edible... was up to the boys.

The test of camping skills didn't end with food and shelter. One morning's activity was orienteering. Orienteering is a challenging combination of brains and brawn. The boys had to know how to use a compass and map to navigate while scrambling over miles of rough terrain. A bad compass reading would mean lots of extra steps, so every boy was sure to double-check his readings.

Leaving it better than when you came

There was little less strain but just as much gain that same afternoon as the boys had an opportunity to ride horseback through the unsurpassed beauty of the Canadian Rockies. Kananaskis is the gateway to Banff and Lake Louise. The biggest problem that the staff would face was trying to keep the boys from using up all their film on the first day.

There was, naturally, a great concern for preserving the beauty of this place. When the boys returned for dinner that night, the first order of business would be a general clean-up of the area surrounding their campsite. At past camporees the Cadet organization has received commendations from local authorities on the care taken to

leave the site in "better" condition than when they arrived.

As the sun set, the boys gathered around the campfire to laugh, sing and retell their experiences and challenges of the day. The counsellors had an opportunity to share how they have faced challenges in their own lives.

This was just part of the experience that an international camporee is designed to provide. A key word for this experience is *respect*. The Christian Reformed Church's Calvinist Cadet Corps which organized this eight-day event, wanted each boy to come away with a healthy respect for himself, for others and for the

See CADET page 2....



Timothy Boender of Leduc, Alta. concentrates on hitting his target



Cadets put together tents with recyclable plastic, poles and rope.

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News

Government should ban experiments on human embryos

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dations came from the Royal Commission on New Reproductive Technologies, which was created in 1989 by the federal government of that time. The commission issued its final report in November 1993.

After the report was released, the government consulted 50 key "stake-holders" to get their reactions. These included religious groups, pro-life and pro-choice groups, the disabled and women's groups.

In July 1995, the government responded by calling for an interim voluntary moratorium on nine uses of NRTs. But in a recent report, the government admits that some people broke the moratorium. For instance, two sex-selection clinics are operating in Canada, payment to sperm donors is continuing in most facilities, and advertisements have appeared in newspapers seeking women willing to sell their eggs.

The new legislation covers more ground than the moratorium and also suggests stiff penalties for those who break the prohibitions: fines of up to \$500,000 and/or prison terms of up to 10 years.

Doesn't go far enough

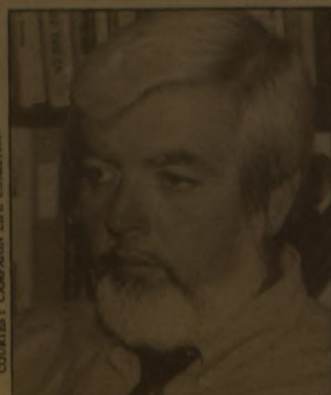
Anna Desilet, executive director of Alliance for Life (a Winnipeg-based pro-life group), asserts that the new legislation is "a step in the right direction" but doesn't go far enough. She agrees with the ban on sex selection for non-medical purposes but adds, "You should go farther and ban any type of selection."

Desilet approves plans to ban buying and selling of genetic materials, but says the government would still allow surplus human embryos to be created in the process of in vitro fertilization (IVF). Desilet explains that IVF involves fertilization of a number of eggs, only some of which are placed in the donor's womb. Although the legislation would ban research on human embryos 14 days after conception, Desilet says there should be a complete ban on such research. "A person is a person, no matter if they're one day old."

One measure that Desilet supports is a ban on germ-line genetic alteration, a process in which genetic material in sperm, eggs or embryos is manipulated. Desilet's organization urged the government to ban that practice, which she describes as "actually changing the genetic code of an

individual.... You're tampering with the nature of that person."

Desilet's view is that the only appropriate place for NRTs would be for an infertile couple to have an egg fertilized in a test tube and placed into the woman's womb. "We have sympathy with those who are infertile," she says. In her view,



Jim Hughes

couples do not have a right to have children, but rather, children should be seen as a gift.

Regarding punishment for those who break the rules, Desilet says, "I think the punishment must be very severe.... There is a great market potential for human reproductive materials."

Jim Hughes, president of Campaign Life Coalition (a national pro-life group), agrees that the new legislation does not go far enough. "The one thing I'm concerned about is they don't have any prohibition on killing unborn children, or stopping the process [of pregnancy] if the child is going to be handicapped. I don't like that at all."

Hughes says, "All of these reproductive technologies bother me greatly because it seems what the good Lord created was the most beautiful and perfect beings. Human beings are saying with some pride, 'I can improve on that.'"

Hughes notes that the legislation bans surrogacy for profit but not surrogacy itself. Surrogacy creates problems for children "who later on are concerned about who is really Mom." He is skeptical about government plans to regulate NRTs by committee. "Is a committee that's set up by the government going to act objectively here, or is it going to be a rubber stamp?"

Hughes is also doubtful about government plans for fines and imprisonment for those breaking the rules. "I don't think it's going to act as a deterrent at all.... It only gives the ap-

pearance of putting teeth into it. I think people are going to do whatever they want."

Hughes sees no place at all for NRTs. As an alternative, he suggests childless couples adopt children. "If we can reach out to women who are distressed and pregnant and offer them viable alternatives, then childless couples will once again be able to adopt, love, nurture those children."

Hughes hopes that concerned Christians will write to or meet with their local MP to express their concerns about this issue. "If a large percentage of the people are opposed to this, they'll change it," he says.

Sabina McLuhan, a researcher with CLC, says the legislation "tries to portray the ban as a total ban, but it's not.... This is not a moral piece of legislation in any terms." McLuhan says the idea of licensing people to do genetic research is "terrible." The proposed fines are strong enough "if they catch people," she says. But, she adds, "We

don't know to what extent these things happen, and the government doesn't either."

In line with other countries

Bertha Knoppers, a specialist in human genetics and biotechnology who works with the University of Montreal's faculty of law, generally approves of the new legislation. "It's very much in line with what's happening around the world," she says. "Internationally, the consensus is against surrogacy, except for the U.S." Both the U.S. and U.K. allow the creation of embryos especially for experimentation for up to 14 days after conception. Knoppers approves such experimentation. "Before that time [14 days], you're not sure you have an embryo.... there's no individuation," she says. Such research, though, would need "professional norms and regulations" and the consent of the couple donating the genetic materials, says Knoppers.

Although the legislation

would ban germline research, Knoppers suggests that some of this should be allowed so that serious diseases could be prevented in future generations of people. "It's part of stewardship," she says. Research about infertility should also be pursued. "We need to know the reasons for infertility."

Knoppers agrees with government plans for licensing NRT researchers because "quality assurance" is important. She also agrees that the punishment proposed by the government is strong enough to be a deterrent. But she notes that last year's moratorium was ineffective.

The technique of IVF should be considered as a viable option by childless Christian couples who want to have children, says Knoppers. If a couple uses its own genetic materials, Knoppers says she does not see why they would object to IVF. "The desire to have children is not cultural. It's a basic human desire," she asserts.

Cadet camp encourages respect for environment

... continued from page 1

environment. The site of the camporee was about 100 km due west of Calgary. The area is known as Kananaskis and the land is supervised by provincial park authorities. With their assistance, and thousands of volunteer hours by men and women associated with the local Cadet clubs in Alberta, this camp was the largest of its kind anywhere.

During the week about 1,400 boys, 250 counsellors and about 150 volunteer staff consumed 10,000 litres of milk, 3,500 loaves of bread, 4,500 kilograms of meat and cheese, and 4,000 kilograms of fruit and vegetables. Just the logistics of keeping the campers supplied was a tremendous task, but the local volunteers were crucial to making this event happen.

Clarence Dykhous, camp director, was "tremendously grateful but not surprised" by the willingness and enthusiasm of the volunteers. "Our organization is based on service. Each week, in North America, Australia and New Zealand almost 700 Cadet clubs meet in their local churches and men/

counsellors give of their time to mentor these boys, sharing their skills, and wisdom and faith."

From marshmallow to bears

The week's activities included horseback riding, mountain biking, archery, riflery, hiking, orienteering, Native craft work and an excursion to Banff and Lake Louise.

"We're thrilled with the boys' and counsellors' enthusiasm for this event," said Dick Broene, executive director of the Calvinist Cadet Corps. "Charter planes from the Midwest, vans from Alaska, families driving out with their sons all the way from the East coast; we even have a couple boys from Japan. We feel privileged to be able to provide this experience for boys."

The boys from Japan participate in the Cadet program as "independent" Cadets while their parents (American citizens) are living and working in Japan.

"We packed a lot of fun and learning into this camp," said assistant camp director, J. Peter Prins. "It was interesting to observe the boys' faces when the

ranger was educating them on the do's and don'ts of living with bears as neighbors. For most of these kids, the biggest concern on their local campouts had been how to get the marshmallow off their fingers after making s'mores. Here at Kamp Kananaskis they are learning that they really are caretakers of creation. The land and the wildlife are all worthy of their respect."

A key ingredient of every camporee is the spiritual adventure. A theme appropriate to the surroundings is selected and carried throughout the camporee by devotions at mealtimes and special evening programs. "On God's Mountains" was this year's theme. Pastor Ron Norman, camp chaplain, stated that "camporee is a really unique opportunity to get to know what's happening in a boy's life. Kids tend to open up to their 'camp family' and talk about things they might not dare to talk about at home. Staff and counsellors have the opportunity and responsibility to help them find some answers — and of course those answers ultimately are found in God's Word."

News



David T. Koyzis

Downsizing ignores an 'economy of enough'

The 1990s have been a time of unprecedented downsizing in both the private and public sectors of the economy. "Downsizing" is an euphemism for laying off employees to make one's business enterprise more competitive on the global market. In the public sector it entails laying off civil servants in the departments, regulatory agencies and Crown corporations to improve a government's fiscal position.

On one level, such actions would seem to make sense. Private corporations are constantly striving to bring as great a return as possible to stockholders for their investment. Doing so means increasing profits. Greater profits mean making more money than is expended on a company's operation. If profits show signs of decreasing or, worse, if a business comes downright unprofitable, costs will have to be cut. Such costs might include capital and labor expenditures. A generation ago, companies were more reluctant to cut their workforces than they are now. Today managers more easily distribute pink slips to their employees.

In the short term, such a strategy appears to pay off, at least for an individual company, and for the time being. Once a company has shorn itself of "excess" labor it should become leaner and more able to function in a global economic climate. Profits should rise and stockholders should be happy.

But if such an approach becomes a general trend and if every company gets on the downsizing bandwagon it is likely to have a detrimental effect on the economy as a whole. If the economy is stagnating and if new alternative jobs are not being produced, massive layoffs are likely to cause a rise in the unemployment rate.

As more people are forced to collect unemployment insurance, government deficits begin to climb and political leaders are forced to consider layoffs in their sector as well.

Skewed priorities

All of this produces certain unavoidable paradoxes. Despite recent reversals, the stockmarkets have been climbing phenomenally over the past few years. This good fortune has coincided with stubbornly high unemployment rates, especially here in Canada. But when unemployment figures begin to look more encouraging, investors get panicky and sell off their stocks, causing a downturn in the markets. It seems that our economic system is increasingly structured to work "best" when a large number of God's imagebearers are unable to earn a living and are made to suffer the pangs of joblessness. This indicates that our priorities are badly skewed.

Bob Goudzwaard and Harry de Lange have recently argued that our Western economies are in need of a spiritual renewal. Our current economic systems are based on the assumption that human labor is simply one more commodity. They further assume that endless economic growth is an unquestioned good, even if it exacerbates such scourges as poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. What we need instead is an "economy of enough" that recognizes the limits in God's creation and refuses to treat his imagebearers as cogs in a machine.

An encouraging climate needed

What role can government play here? As part of its calling to do justice, government has an obligation to protect the rights of individuals and communities to fulfil their own respective callings. Part of God's call is to engage in productive labor as cultivators of his creation. Where people are prevented from fulfilling this calling there is injustice.

To be sure, government cannot by itself solve the problem of downsizing, but it can create a legal and political climate that will encourage companies to treat their employees as irreplaceable members of the work community with their own gifts and insights to contribute.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Camporee facts



A get-together for some of the 1,400 boys, 250 counsellors and 150 volunteers who attended the 1996 International Camporee in late July.

Robert De Jonge

KAMP KANANASKIS, Alta. — * The Calvinist Cadet Corps 1996 International Camporee was held July 24-30, at Kananaskis Provincial Park, Alberta.

* To attend the boys had to be 12-years-old by December 31 of 1996 and had to have completed a camping certification course.

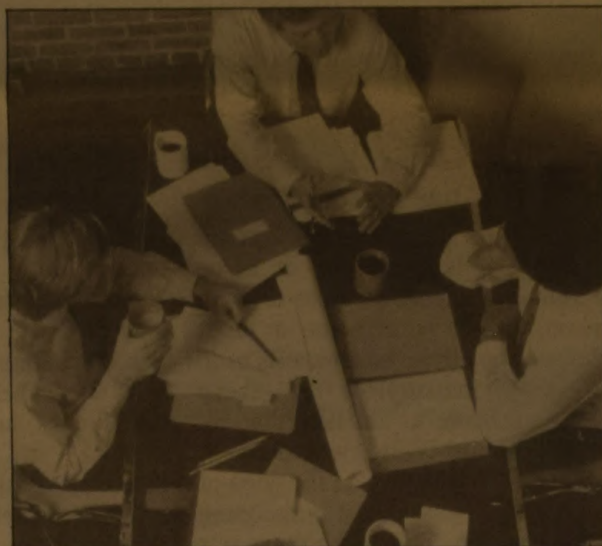
* Older boys who had attended a previous camporee would attend as junior counselors and were given the opportunity to go on a white-water rafting trip while at the camporee.

* This was the 11th International Camporee. They have taken place every third year

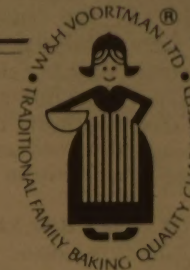
since 1966. Other sites have included the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California; Land Between the Lakes, Kentucky; Black Hills, South Dakota; and Orangeville, Ontario.

* The Calvinist Cadet Corps was founded by the Christian Reformed Church in 1952 as a Reformed Christian boys' club with the purpose of assisting boys in growing mentally, physically, socially and spiritually. Its international headquarters is in Grand Rapids, Mich.

* The organization serves approximately 650 clubs in North America and another 50 clubs through brother organizations in Australia and New Zealand.



"Downsizing" is an euphemism for laying off employees to make one's business enterprise more competitive on the global market.



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Guest Editorial

Psalm 91, Walmart, *The National*, and being at home

Agnes Kramer-Hamstra

"You're not really a comfortable member of the Christian Reformed Church." A friend wrote this to me recently. Was it true? If it was true, did it matter? How important is it to be "comfortable," to seek out situations and places without tension? If I am not comfortable, does that mean I'm not "at home"?

So went the questions. My mind turned over the importance or unimportance of being comfortable, of being at home. And I discovered that my thoughts on this subject have changed. God has conspired in many ways to change my ideas about being at home, my inborn longing for comfortableness. Among these ways, God used Psalm 91, our local Walmart and CBC's *The National*.

The boundary of a family home is more like a flexible skin than a hard shell. Children grow;

the skin bulges. They leave; the skin shrinks. A parent moves in, a spouse dies or leaves; the skin takes yet another shape. The place of home changed as many of our parents and grandparents left the compact, moist place of the Netherlands for the far-flung spaces of Canada.

Where is home? What is home? What made our parents, and what makes us, feel at home and comfortable in the country where we live? What are we teaching our children about comfort and about what it means to be at home? What makes us at home in our churches?

Our home is a person. Our home is changeless. Our home is a fearsome communion: now Creator, fathering; now Jesus Christ, redeeming; now Holy Spirit, goading, comforting, renewing. The hands that hold the universe do so with steadfast passion. The heartbeat of the One who is our Home pulses forgiving renewal for each generation of seekers. Our Home is jealous when we put down our roots in shabby places, when we become comfortable and fall asleep with wooden lovers.

As we are wakened to God's heartbeat in every particle of creation and life, we are wakened to tension. The more at home we become with the life-giving breath of God, the more uncomfortable we will become with the cultural air we breathe.

Our cultural 'home' has poisoned air

This question of being at home is basic to our culture. Our culture tells us to be at home shopping at Walmart: someone is there to greet us. We are encouraged to be at home in acres and acres of choice. The air we breathe tells us to find comfort in a marketplace of cheap commodities that are made to not last, that are made on the backs of Third World sweatshops.

We live with the myth of being on the edge of whatever is latest and newest in the burgeoning technology of information. This technology acts as if each bit of information is equally important. While the children of the barren hill country of Lesotho are too malnourished to play, the children of Western culture are made lethargic by a diet of mass media. The mass media creates a climate in which they are spectators. The mass media breathes an atmosphere into their lungs which includes a precocious sexuality. This untimely, out of context way of dealing with information raises the hair of those who seek true knowledge and understanding.

Are we comfortable with the evening news? Comfort turns to risk when we allow the door to open a crack, to be God's ears listening for what lies behind the 30-second soundbites on *The National*.

Cambodians have recently joined our local church. War turned their homes inside out. When Lee was a young man, the Khmer Rouge came to

separate men, women, old and young, each group becoming part of a forced labor camp. Records of marriages were destroyed: Sem has located the husband whom she thought was dead when she fled Cambodia. In trying to get him to Canada she is struggling to prove their marital status.

Those who remained in Cambodia and who returned to their homes have returned to "killing fields." Their home soil is sown with millions of land mines. As Lee and Sem join our worship, the shape of who we are as a communion changes. When a brother or sister comes with a story that puts meat on the soundbite, Someone is knocking on the door of the home I wanted to keep "peaceful."

At-home with God means risk

The Holy Spirit will empower us to face the tension that comes from being at-home with God. The communion of saints, faithful artists and writers, and publications such as *Christian Courier* create a place where those who choose God as their at-home can meet the culture around us. While Sietze Buning, Hugh Cook, Matth Cupido describe the inside of our particular home, Sennigh, essayist Virginia Stem Owens, storyteller Madeleine L'Engle, artist Gerry Vaandering and many others keep vigil at the gate.

Those who came before us have left us a spiritual inheritance. They are the ones who opened the door of their homes in the Netherlands during WWII. We can follow the lead of those whose homes became places of risk, as young men, underground workers and Jews were sheltered. With God as our at-home, our family and church homes will become shelters in the deepest sense, in a Kingdom-coming way.

We find shelter when we pray, *Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name*. We open our door to risk and discomfort when we pray, *Your Kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven*. We open our hands for food for the journey as we say, *Give us today our daily bread*. We place ourselves with all that is broken and aching on this earth as we pray, *Forgive us our debts....* And we give ourselves over to healing discomfort when we pray, *...as we forgive our debtors*.

Lead us not into temptation: we echo Jesus when he asked God to keep us earthbound, but to protect us from the evil one. All our hope and faith in the authority of God, who hears the cries of the homeless and discomforted, echo as we pray: *For yours is the Kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. And ever. Amen.*

Agnes Kramer-Hamstra feels most comfortable with the joke about how many elders it takes to change a lightbulb. She lives in London, Ont.

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Letters

Acknowledge science's findings re: homosexuality

I am grateful to see Mr. Witvoet's editorial, "How can churches improve on pastoral care to homosexuals?" I hope there is room for a gay person to contribute to this discussion and that my perceptions and suggestions help us to understand each other better.

I believe it's essential for the Christian

Reformed Church to update its official information on homosexuality before it considers pastoral ministry. This is an easy task if you turn to the psychology departments of major universities in the province, the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, and the Sex Information and Education Council of Canada for advice.

You cannot minister pastorally to anyone if you are under the false impression that they are mentally ill. This is currently the case with Report 42 in the *Acts of Synod 1973*. Throughout the report we are told that "the general conclusion of modern research," claims that "homosexuality is a disordered condition and a handicap comparable to other abnormal physical and psychological conditions" (p.624).

portraying all gays on the basis of this disturbed sample since he, along with Synod 1973, considered all gays to be deeply disturbed and in need of therapy.

His conclusions: that "the plight of the homosexual is tragic" can be recognized in *The Acts of Synod 1973* (p. 614), including our so-called potential for despair, self-hate, personal disintegration, alcoholism and mental illness.

Homosexuality is a choice

I admire your courage in bringing the different opinions about homosexuality out in the open, as you did in your July 12 issue.

I fully agree with Andrew Kuyvenhoven's opinion, which is the most biblical, and states that a partnership of homosexual persons cannot be justified by the Church of Christ.

Contrary to homosexual beliefs, God didn't make homosexuals that way.

James 1:13 states: "Let no man say he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted by evil, neither does he tempt any man."

God did not put within a person a poison pill called sodomy. There are many blue-ribbon medical studies that support the fact that homosexuality is *learned behavior*. It is determined by choice, not chance.

I am puzzled that Rem Kooistra endorses the third position on this issue, as Dr. Hendrik Hart states in his book *Setting Our Sights by the Morning Star*: "God allows homosexuals to be sexually active within the same bonds of morality that limit heterosexual activity." If this is true, then students at Christian schools should be taught that there is an alternative lifestyle equally created by God.

Is this the exchange of the truth of God for a lie (Romans 1:25-27)?

The Bible clearly teaches that God loves every homosexual but does not accept homosexuality nor a partnership of homosexual partners.

Peter Aalhuizen
Burnaby, B.C.

We need to practise unconditional love

I commend you for having the nerve to print the articles on homosexuality in your July 12 issue.

The writers are honest enough to admit that this is not an easy, black and white issue, as others would have us think. It takes integrity to admit that you don't have an easy answer.

Unconditional love is something we all need practice at. We can talk about it,

but unless we love without conditions, we aren't doing it. How can this servant accept our Savior's unconditional love when I don't share it.

Jesus has washed the most terrible of my sins away. I'm sure he will wash homosexuality away also, if not now, at the judgment.

John Dreise
Fordwich, Ont.

Keep your Spirited feet on solid ground

I believe God is my Father.

I have accepted his son as my Savior.

But, at times I seem to be a bit confused about the workings of the Holy Spirit. Marian Den Boer's experience doesn't help ("Twenty-five hundred women become 'releasers of life' at Airport Fellowship Conference," CC, July 19).

When attending a conference her knees buckled and she fell down on the floor laughing, drunk with the Spirit. What works for Marian probably doesn't work for me. I have no desire to fall down on the floor, crawl in the dust,

laughing my head off, in order to enjoy and feel the Holy Spirit's presence. Indeed, the Spirit moves in mysterious ways, and I trust Marian had a good and blessed day. Because of her experience, she now thinks that her personal ministry involves blowing the Holy Spirit on Dutch people. Blowing too hard could cause problems, and we suggest Marian remain standing, with her feet on solid ground, without disturbing windmill movements.

Klaas Terpstra
Hamilton, Ont.

Perpetrating a myth?

This is a complete falsehood. In December 1973, the medical establishment deleted homosexuality from the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*. Yet the CRC's official document on homosexuality continues to promote this myth and wonders why so many gays leave the church.

Homosexuality was dropped as psychiatric disorder when clinical studies of gays and lesbians in the general population as early as 1973 repeatedly showed that they were virtually indistinguishable from straight people in terms of psychopathology. This means that as a group, we are as well adjusted, optimistic, responsible, content and fulfilled as the straight population.

In 1973, these findings came as a shock to the media establishment, who relied on Irving Bieber's 1962 large-scale study, *Homosexuality: A Psychoanalytical Study of Male Homosexuals*, as the definitive work on the subject. All the homosexuals who took part in Bieber's research were psychiatric patients: 28 schizophrenics, 31 neurotics and 42 character disorders. He saw no problem

Science and Scripture

The conclusions of any report are only as valid as the information they are based on, and, before the conclusions of Synod 1973 are adopted as final I believe it's important to review the report's own mandate. The report (pp. 622-23) says we must recognize the authority of scientific truth when interpreting Scripture, and while acknowledging the prior authority of Scripture, "try to bring the two together insofar as possible."

Before the church can minister pastorally to gays and lesbians it has to provide itself with an honest and accurate portrayal of homosexuality based on the general conclusions of modern research. Only then will it be able to fulfil the mandate of Synod 1973 and be able to consider what Scripture has to say about us, including the morality of gay couples.

I do not expect this to happen. All I ask is that the church officially encourage active fellowship with gays and lesbians including gay couples. It may allow relationships of trust to develop so that we can learn more about each other. Then we can let the work of the Holy Spirit take us where that Spirit will.

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Environment

Give the planet a sporting chance

Here come the Green Olympics in 2000!

SYDNEY, Australia (NC) — While most people watched the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta for the sports, there was a group of people from Greenpeace in Australia who watched the Olympics for things such as energy production, water treatment, use of toxins and transportation. Greenpeace Australia is helping to make the Sydney Summer Olympics in 2000 the most environmentally friendly ever (at least in modern times).

Energy production

While energy production using coal is a huge contributor to climate change, and nuclear energy creates radioactive waste, solar energy is clean and renewable. Planners for the Sydney Olympics will be working on making the most of all types of solar energy from passive solar design (i.e., positioning

buildings to take advantage of the sun and shade), to the storage of the sun's energy in photovoltaic cells, to solar thermal which is a technology specifically designed to heat water.

Water treatment

The use of chlorine and chlorine chemicals in water treatment has increasingly come under fire. There have been reports from the United States which link chlorination of drinking water with increased rates of bladder and colon cancer. Amsterdam, the Netherlands' biggest city, has successfully phased out chlorine water disinfection, acknowledging the risks of this process. Chlorination of swimming pools has also come under scrutiny and like drinking water, there are ways of cleaning without using chlorine. Where possible, the Sydney Olympic site will make use of alternative, non-chlorine based, water treatment technologies.

Use of Toxins

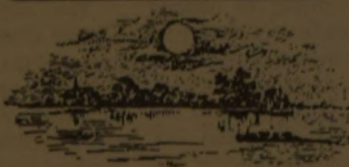
PVC — or polyvinyl chloride — is a product of the highly dangerous and toxic chlorine industry. PVC is an environmental poison at almost every point of its life cycle. In Australia, PVC is typically found in drainage pipes, coatings on electrical cable and wires and in flooring. The Environmental Guidelines for the 2000 Summer Olympics state, "Sydney is committed to ...minimizing and ideally avoiding the use of chlorine based products such as PCBs, PVC and chlorine bleached paper."

Transportation

Sustainable transportation activists state that at the heart of the Olympic transportation system there should be a combination of effective rail, low emission and electric vehicles, extensive bike paths and what is known as Personal Public Transportation or PPT. PPT is essentially an information system which would allow each commuter immediate information about how to best get to where he or she is going and how long it will take.

So if you watched the Summer Olympics in Atlanta you may see sites and systems that will be a lot "greener" in the year 2000.

Creation waits...



John Wood

Don't let sleeping bears lie

"Shh, we don't want to wake up the bear," the six year old cautioned. She stood peering

over the railing as vainly I tried to point out the sleeping bear. "The mother bear is right over there, all covered with trees," I explained.

"I don't see her, where is the bear?" came the reply.

A fair question, to which only a few years of maturity would bring a satisfactory answer. So we substituted a quick glimpse of a raccoon, and a cotton tail rabbit, and finally a long climb up the dune face (twice) as a diversion. Finally, the sleeping bear came alive for this child. Running free up and down the sand, tumbling, fumbling and making big piles was more fun than an imaginary bear. The whole episode set me thinking. What violence do we do to meaning when we rip a story free from its generative context and dispense it to all comers? What happens when we experience the natural world without the context of Scripture, or an experienced guide?

Whispers and winds

Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore on the northwest side of Michigan's lower peninsula is a spectacular landscape — a must-see if you are ever in this part of the U.S. This is a glacier country, and the mark of the glaciers' passage is everywhere the careful eye gazes. In just a few hundred yards you move from one blazing sun and stinging wind on the dune face to cool, deep shadowed beech-maple forest with only a whisper in the tree tops above. The "bear" itself is a captured dune perched on top of a 450-foot high ridge that parallels the lakeshore. The wind plucks grains of sand from the beach and carries them over the top, sand-blasting the ridge. We stepped out of the trees and in 100 feet were holding our hats against the blast over the sheer edge. Wow! Feel the power of the wind racing to re-establish the equilibrium altered by the differing temperatures of the earth and water.

Staying on the trail

The story of the sleeping bear and her two cubs and the nearby Manitou Islands is the echo of the Chippewa native culture that once flourished here. Summer homes have come to replace that earlier way of life and any "environmental wisdom" in the old story has largely vanished. Today the lessons are taught by signpost, brochure, visitor centre and park naturalist. From what I could see, fewer than one in 10 were reading the signs and brochures with any insight. Even this passive education was lost on many that day.

We stood by one sand dune overlook and traced the footprints ahead of us. Beside us a bold sign vainly pleaded, "Stay on the trail!" It is hard to convey in words just how destructive a treading foot can be on a dune. People who would never deface a painting will unknowingly trash a natural landscape in their effort to "enjoy nature." Walking lightly on the earth is a skill that escapes us in the modern life. Mostly we seem to just blunder along — and pity the place that can't take the pressure.

Early in the day my friend, who had grown up spending his summers in this area, pointed out all the places they had raced across in dune buggies. His uncle had run a summer business taking tourists on trips up the beaches and over the dunes. It sounded like fun. Later in the day, after we had seen several open wounds in the park landscape he quietly said, "I never realized just how much damage we were doing in those machines." It took a mighty effort, a determined and at times unpleasant fight to end that practice.

Telling new stories

The story of the sleeping bear is not new to my friend. So what was different today? Perhaps it was that the story came in a new context. We spent the morning discussing the scriptural mandate to care for creation; and that gave us a new way to read the landscape.

Take some time this summer to visit a "sleeping bear" near you. Take a friend along and review the stewardship mandate together. I think you, too, will find yourself seeing the land in a new way and hearing the stories with a new ear.

John R. Wood teaches environmental science at The King's University College in Edmonton and aquatic biology at The Au Sable Institute, a Christian environmental field station in Michigan.

GREEN Tips

Seven environmentally friendly tips for your lawn and garden

- 1) Always aim for diversity in your lawn and garden: plant a variety of grass seeds in your lawn, and "companion plant" in your garden.
- 2) Cultivate plants which are indigenous to the area in which you live.
- 3) Dig or pull out unwanted weeds.
- 4) Make sure that insects really are unwanted before you get rid of them.
- 5) Mix 2 tbsp. (30 mL) pure liquid soap and one quart (1 litre) of water and spray as an insect repellent.
- 6) Compost lawn, garden and food wastes for a dirt-cheap supply of natural soil-enriching fertilizer.
- 7) Remember to be cautious — especially around children — when using any pest-control substances.

For more environmentally friendly tips, you can request a free copy of "Stepping Lightly on the Earth: Everyone's Guide to Toxics in the Home" by writing to: Greenpeace Information Office, 185 Spadina Avenue, Suite 604, Toronto, Ontario, M5T 2C6.



Sand dunes in California's Death Valley National Monument

ARTS & MEDIA

Pinocchio



Pinocchio a visual and story-telling treat

Marian Van Til

Stars Martin Landau, Genevieve Bujold, Jonathan Taylor Thomas. Directed by Steve Barron. Based on the book by Carlo Collodi.

Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* is not a children's story by any stretch of anyone's imagination, except Disney's. That's why in Disney's current animated feature about the Hunchback, the film company had to pretty much demolish Hugo's story by dumbing it down and giving it a happy ending; and then, the result had to be hyped to the hilt.

Fortunately, the current film based on Carlo Collodi's children's classic *The Adventures of Pinocchio* doesn't stoop to such tactics. While Collodi's 1883 story about a puppet boy who longs to be and finally becomes human is not in the same literary league as Hugo's tragic classic, it's a fine story (with an equally obvious moral). It translates into an exceptional film perfectly suited to both children and their parents. (The film may scare very young children, but not nastily so.)

Collodi's late 18th century Italian setting is vividly evoked here, and so is his story-telling ability. The film brilliantly combines live actors and scenery with an "animatronic" Pinocchio puppet made by Jim Henson's Creature Shop. Via computer wizardry, Pinocchio walks and talks haltingly like the spindly, pine-carved creature he is. But it is his face that is most amazing. While seeming to be made of wood, that face with its huge, blue-painted eyes is able to capture the most subtle of expressions and emotional nuances.

Fascinating characters

Well-known American Martin Landau as Geppetto once again proves how versatile an actor he is. Landau is the aging, lonely Italian peasant. While child actor Jonathan Taylor Thomas has only a small role as Pinocchio the real boy, he convincingly provides the puppet's voice throughout, first timidly, as

Pinocchio learns to speak, then exuberantly as Pinocchio confronts the world. The puppet's features are based on Thomas's own, reinforcing Pinocchio's eventual realistic transformation from puppet to human boy.

Filmed in the Czech Republic, a Czech village beautifully stands in for a bustling Italian one, and we observe a fascinating assortment of characters and scenes: crowded village roads teem with vendors of all sorts; an opera singer humorously tries to gain a few coins by singing arias in the alley, but his efforts aren't appreciated by his nearest neighbor; wild boys run through the streets and wreak occasional havoc on the vendors; a male/female duo of flamboyant con artists are out to get rich any way they can and prey on the unsuspecting; Lorenzini, the wolf in sheep's clothing who runs the local puppet theatre, swaggers around in magnificent costumes and self-important style. Kind-hearted Leona, Geppetto's secret love from his youth, lives near his puppet shop and offers support and help when Pinocchio disappears.

More than flesh and blood

The cricket Pepe (immortalized as "Jiminy Cricket" in Disney's exceptional 1941 animated version of this tale), acts as Pinocchio's conscience. But he's a subtle force. In each instance that he sees Pinocchio heading in the wrong direction, he states his case and then backs off and waits for Pinocchio to take — or not take — his advice. Visually, he's almost as "real" as Pinocchio. He looks as though he'd crunch (as unfortunate crickets do) if he were to get stepped on.

The theme of the film says humanity is not just about being made of flesh and blood. Being human means acting humanely: caring for others and not just self; acting with honesty and honor; and often it means acting with restraint, not doing or saying everything — nasty or not — you feel like. In a society like ours and a week when news came of three children in Red Deer beating up a mentally chal-



lenged woman this seems a very pertinent theme.)

Collodi's True Playland, where lazy boys can play and carouse from morning till night and no one ever need submit to schooling or other discipline or authority, is turned into Lorenzini's Terra Magica, a kind of perverse theme park where self-interest and hedonism reign. But embracing such a place has terrible consequences, Pinocchio finds out. If you act like an ass — wild, lazy and obstinate — you literally turn into one.

Story of regeneration

There are a number of intriguing religious overtones in Collodi's story; they are less obvious in the film, but still present: Terra Magica resembles Vanity Fair in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Indeed, Pinocchio is a kind of pilgrim who must overcome bizarre and frightening obstacles which have arisen because of his own self-absorption. And he must spend time in the belly of a sea monster *a la* the obstinate Jonah before being "resurrected" and spiritually and physically transformed from wood to flesh and blood. Collodi's Pinocchio seems to echo and re-echo Saint Paul's lament: *The good I want to do, I don't do; and what I don't want to do, I do.*

This film has tamed Collodi's story. Perhaps it was felt Collodi's story is too dark, or too moralizing. The film Pinocchio is merely mischievous, and his descent into trouble occurs more from gullibility than perversity. Collodi's Pinocchio has a darker side and a sharper edge, and it takes much more adversity and sorrow to renew him.

Still, this film maintains substantially the spirit of the original and tells its story in a captivating manner which is a feast for the eye and a boon to the heart.

Calvin professor's book looks at 'pop culture wars'

Phil de Haan

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. — Calvin College professor Bill Romanowski's book *Pop Culture Wars: Religion and the Role of Entertainment in American Life* was some three years in the making, while he has spent a decade studying pop culture and entertainment. His 1990 PhD dissertation at Bowling Green was called "Rock 'n' Religion" and looked at the Christian Contemporary Music industry. In *Pop Culture Wars* Romanowski spends a great deal of time looking at movies and TV.

His book — he calls it a "historical survey" — examines the history of popular culture in North America, going back to the late 19th century when the idea that there was "high" culture and "low" culture was first introduced. Such distinctions, says Romanowski, kicked off discussions that continue still.

"High culture," he says, "became superior culture which then disparages other culture, specifically low culture." Romanowski notes that distinctions between high and low culture often also had overtones of race and gender.

"What is blues?" he asks. "It's not high culture. It's pop culture. But it's also black culture. The same thing for romance novels. They're low culture. Who reads them? Women. We have arbitrarily drawn lines, and usually the right side of the line to be on has been the side of British European high culture."

Pop culture functions like 'high culture'?

Romanowski argues in his book that pop culture, despite the efforts of those who have disparaged it, still functions like high culture. "It transmits values and culture. It does social criticism. Whether we recognize it or not, it functions like art."

That function, Romanowski says, is significant in understanding today's discussions of film and TV. Critics of TV and film, he says, criticize those media for the roles they fill as art — the values they communicate, the social roles they play — yet don't recognize film and TV as art, but rather as commodities, and try to regulate them as such.

"Hollywood is criticized for what it does as art, but on the other hand it (Hollywood) is treated the way we treat soap

and laundry detergent, and we try to regulate it. It can't work that way."

Romanowski also argues that pinning societal woes on Hollywood is too easy — and incorrect. He says family, school, faith communities and other civic and social organizations also bear responsibility for influencing people's development and their view of the world.

"It's a lot easier to say Hollywood's to blame for illegitimate birth rates," he says, "than it is to look at such issues as poverty, for example."

"Yet," he adds, "I don't want to let Hollywood off the hook entirely. The question about their responsibility is a tough one and the issues are complex. But I do think Hollywood falls short in several areas, including how it treats violence and how it treats sexuality. I think it romanticizes both."

Church's view prevents it from impact

As the subtext of Romanowski's book suggests, he also spends time looking at the interplay between faith and culture, specifically the role of the organized church in shaping Hollywood.

What he finds is disturbing. "The religious community," he says, "has accepted that high versus low culture distinction and has tended to equate pop culture with the forces of evil."

Romanowski points to the fact that the Christian Reformed Church did not officially allow movie going until 1967. That decision equated pop culture with evil; it also did not allow the church to have an impact on that culture in any way, let alone a positive way.

"The decision of the organized church to shy away from pop culture," he says, "has made it tougher today for Christians to make an impact. The church's efforts also have been hampered by the general secularization of society."

Romanowski's book is already being hailed as a definitive work. *Publisher's Weekly* noted that the book "brings a fresh perspective to the contemporary conflict between Christianity and culture," adding that it is "a stunning portrait of the interplay of religion and popular culture."

Church

Three Chinese Christians beaten to death in fierce house church crackdown

BEIJING, China (Compass Direct) — Three house church leaders have been beaten to death by Chinese police in the last three months in a fierce crackdown launched country-wide by authorities against unregistered Christians. More than

300 house churches have been closed, and scores of believers have been arrested.

One of the victims' names has been released. She is Zhang Xiuju, a 36-year-old from Xinhua county in Henan province. According to a Voice of America

report, she was dragged out of her home on the night of May 26, and beaten to death the following day. Police claimed that she had jumped from a car and been killed accidentally. But her family reported that when police returned her body, they offered

the family \$600 to keep quiet.

A second victim, a man in his 40s, was arrested with two others, and then beaten to death near Wenzhou, Zhejiang province, in April. Sources well-connected to the house church networks say that the police raided them because the three men were operating a printing press for religious materials. The murdered man had three children, and local believers are rallying to help the family. The other two men, in their 30s, have been given three years "re-education through labor."

The third victim is a 24-year-old in Shaanxi province who was one of 10 beaten by police when they broke up a house meeting in early April. This incident followed a standoff with police when 100 house church members protested to local police for harshly beating five Christians in February.

said, "The authorities' strategy is to break the house churches of Shanghai and intimidate the rest of the Christians throughout the country." Other sources report mass arrests: five believers in Qingdao, Shandong Province in April; eight in Jiangsu province also in April, 30 in Sichuan, 70 in Henan, and 45 in Hunan. Most have been released however.

China expels Australian evangelist

HONG KONG (Compass Direct) — Chinese authorities arrested and deported Hong Kong-based evangelist, John Short, who was on a Bible teaching tour among unregistered churches in northern China.

57-year-old Short, a veteran missionary with 16 years of ministry experience in mainland China, was detained as he flew into Beijing on May 24. He was held for eight hours, questioned, and deported the same day. No reason was given for his expulsion, but as a policeman interrogating him said, "Too many people believe in Jesus today in China."

Upon his return to Hong Kong, Short was criticized

strongly by local representatives of the mainstream churches. Rev. Lee Ching Chee of the Hong Kong Council of the Church of Christ in China, likened him to a "drug smuggler" and berated him for failing to observe the laws of China. Short countered by accusing Hong Kong church leaders of adopting a "tortoise scenario: the head has been pulled back into the shell.... No one wants to be seen to be criticizing China, but we need people to stand up and say what they believe in."

Although Short was not told why he was arrested, he told *Compass* it may have been due to his close contacts not just with house church leaders, but especially with those who are

Christian activists.

"Since the Tiananmen massacre in 1989, many new believers have come to faith in Christ, and they are of a younger generation who are not content merely to preach the gospel — they want to change the social system also." Short knew well the jailed labor union leader Gao Feng, and suspects that anyone with contact with this group will be closely monitored by authorities.

An Australian citizen, Short plans to return to China as soon as he can secure a new passport. He vows that nothing will stop him preaching the gospel. "We can't do anything else, even if we're stoned to death," he says.

Protestants are 'enemy forces'

According to Daniel Kwan, a China watcher in Hong Kong, "China's religious policy has taken a sharp turn to the left." He cites an internal document by the Ministry of Public Security which has singled out Protestants as "enemy forces," and warns that the government is definitely targeting all religions as part of a campaign to create a new so-called "spiritual civilization."

Human Rights Watch Asia spokesperson, Robin Munro, comments, "As Chinese society has become more capitalist, more and more people have turned to religion, which galls the government as it exposes how weak their ideology is."

New director begins work at CRWRC Canada

Rachel Boehm Van Harmelen
BURLINGTON, Ont. — Wayne deJong, former deputy executive director of Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR), began his work as director of CRWRC Canada last month.

DeJong was the unanimous choice of a search committee and was subsequently approved by the board of trustees of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and Synod 1996.

DeJong graduated from the University of Guelph with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture and went on to receive his designation as a Certified Management Accountant from the Society of Management Accountants of Canada. DeJong has served in positions of increasing responsibility over the past 15 years, including controller at OXFAM-Canada, a large international relief and development organization, and financial



Wayne deJong

analyst at Supply and Services Canada, the central purchasing and accounting department of the Canadian government.

DeJong worked in Ethiopia and Malawi as director of finance for Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief and subsequently as deputy executive director. CPAR is a development

organization similar to CRWRC. It works mainly in Ethiopia, Uganda, Malawi, Angola and the Philippines.

DeJong says his experience living and working in Africa will be an asset to him as he oversees CRWRC's relief and development ministry in more than 30 countries worldwide. Also key to his role at CRWRC is his government experience. At CRWRC Canada he will serve as key liaison with the Canadian International Development Agency, a federal agency that funds CRWRC-Canada's work to the tune of \$1.25 million each year.

"I have a longstanding commitment to the international development process," deJong says. "I am looking forward to working with CRWRC and contributing to its effectiveness in showing God's love to people in need."

'Jesus Boat' survives 2,000-year 'voyage'

KIBBUTZ GINOSAR, Israel (Christians and Israel) — *We are happy to inform you that the ancient boat from the time of Jesus has been taken out of the liquid that has preserved it for the last nine years. The boat is now ready for public viewing.*

This succinct announcement was issued recently by the Yigal Allon Center Kibbutz Ginosar, Israel. The ancient vessel was discovered in 1986 on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, near the kibbutz, exposed by a two-year drought.

A rescue excavation was mounted. The boat was "packaged" in polyurethane foam and floated up the lake to its present location. There it has been undergoing conservation treatment with a special wax material that concealed it from view; this has now been removed.



The boat, exposed after undergoing conservation treatment.

Church

Chapter & Verse



Wayne Brouwer
★ Andrew Kuyvenhoven
Laura Smit
Al Wolters

Personal evangelism

We must "always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks" why we live and die in Christian hope, says 1 Peter 3:15. Some think that this text refers to a challenge in court. The New Revised Standard Version has: "Be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you." I don't think that's right. The saying is very general: "Be *always* ready to answer to *anyone* who asks" concerning the *hope* that is in you. Also, the use of the word "hope" makes it easier to think of a neighbor who is curious than of a magistrate who is vindictive.

Besides, Jesus said that when we get arrested for being his followers we don't have to be ready with our answers: "When they arrest you do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say" (Matt. 10:19).

Expect to give account of your faith

In 1 Peter 3:15, however, the point is that we must be ready to answer before we are asked. "Always be ready to make a defense of the faith (an *apologia*) to anyone who asks."

Christians must be able to make a reasonable statement of what they believe and why they live as they do. Our church education should be aimed at such a personal expression and formulation of the Christian faith. Just as in school students learn to give an account of themselves in essays and speeches so the church should expect its members to give an intelligent account of the Christian hope that inspires all our action.

It is a shame to Christ and to our leadership if church members cannot tell what they believe. That's the situation which the church reformers found in the 16th century. Then they insisted that everyone should at least know the Apostles' Creed as a statement of faith, the Ten Commandments as a guide for behavior, and the Lord's Prayer as a model for our approach to God. That minimum requirement went into every catechism. It should still be a minimum requirement, oft-repeated, taught with modern methods and expressed by all learners in their own words.

Stating your faith with gentleness

Public Profession of Faith should no longer consist of a preacher asking a long list of questions to which the "confessor" mumbles an hardly audible "I do." Instead of the minister asking: "Do you believe this and that and will you do thus from now on," the catechumen could say: "I believe this and that and I intend to live for Christ in such a manner." We should make such changes not to show off for one another, but to be ready to give an account to those who do not belong to Christ.

Peter does not spell out *what* we should say but he does tell us *how* we should say it: "Do this with gentleness and respect." We may never be arrogant about our faith and our knowledge, because they are the gifts from God. And we may never be rude to those who are non-Christians. Some people try to ram their beliefs down other people's throats. But the Bible says: "With gentleness and respect." Muslim and Hindu, and atheists, too, are worthy of respect, especially while we explain to them how God made them and loved them.

Andrew Kuyvenhoven is a retired minister of the Christian Reformed Church and a learner in the field of personal evangelism.

Volunteer with a monkey and a light

BURLINGTON, Ont. (CRWRC) — How do you describe an experience you will never forget? What is the first thing that comes to mind when you are asked about your volunteer work? These were some of the questions Annette Bruinsma faced when she returned to Canada recently. Annette is originally from Covenant Chr. Ref. Church in St. Catharines, Ont., and in the process of transferring her membership to the First CRC in Guelph, Ont.

Annette volunteered her time and finances in May to complete a two-week assignment of internal auditing for CRWRC in Indonesia. A qualified Chartered Accountant (CA), she felt God wanted her to use her gifts in a very practical way. Lester Jager of Calgary did a similar assignment as a volunteer in Cambodia. Both Annette and Lester were linked to CRWRC through ServiceLink, a program which co-ordinates volunteer services for the CRC in Canada.

A city of disparities

And how did Annette describe her experience? "It was great. I would love to do it again!" She was amazed at "the number of people everywhere, the lush green countryside, the abundance of great fruit" in Indonesia. Jakarta was a city of huge disparities with numerous Mercedes and BMWs — and many slums. Agriculture was labor-intensive, with most things done by hand, and only a fortunate few able to use water buffalo or oxen.

"I thought it was really neat to see the oil lamps used at night to light up the streets," said Annette. Each home was responsible to keep its lamps going at night. The cumulative effect was that the whole street would be lit up. Perhaps it reflected that, "people don't like to be alone and have such a strong sense of community."

Some things were definitely different — like the cremation ceremonies Annette observed and the breakfast of rice and spicy chicken (instead of Cheerios). During her sightseeing, Annette even discovered a monkey which enjoyed a comfortable perch on her shoulder.

Annette used her "lamp," a spirit of Christ's love, to "shine in the streets of Indonesia" too.



Annette Bruinsma with a monkey on her back in Indonesia

She spent three days auditing the accounts of CRWRC's office in Indonesia. Together with Paul Brink, the CRWRC program director there, and other visitors from the U.S. she visited agencies with which CRWRC works, like BIMA (Self-Reliance Guidance Foundation) in the Sumatra Island and MITAYANI in the city of Jakarta. Some of her time was spent with board members and staff of these partner groups, reviewing their work, their system of accounts, and making recommendations for improvement.

Annette was intrigued by the heavy emphasis people placed on doing all their transactions on

a cash-basis instead of using banks or chequing accounts. This, she discovered, highlighted the need for good financial control systems. As she shared her suggestions, she also noted how financial control systems would be viewed as a threat to relationships built strongly on trust. Some would ask, "Why do I need to have two other people sign when I trust the cashier to give the money properly him or herself?"

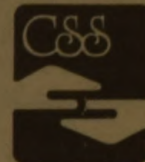
Grateful for peace

Now that she is settled back to her work in Kitchener, Ont., Annette is very grateful for what she has, for the peace and security of living in Canada. "CRWRC is doing great work and I am so glad to have been a part of it and to have seen it first-hand," Annette remarks. Indeed, CRWRC is also grateful for people like Annette who have made such a significant contribution to the work of their partner groups and enabled their ministry to the poor.

Anyone interested in more information about where they can serve with the CRC agencies can contact the ServiceLink coordinator at: P.O. Box 5070 Stn. LCD 1, Burlington, ON L7R 3Y8

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Summer Story

Ma and Joe

Michael R. Miller

Ma had been living in that old house since before anyone could remember. The house sat between two giant hemlock trees, on the edge of a small lake. The lake took up about ten acres and it curved around a small granite cliff on one end. Sugar maples, weeping willows and hemlocks circled the rest of its shore. It was without doubt the most beautiful spot around.

The source of the lake was a spring that surfaced about halfway up the mountain. The spring formed a creek which flowed down the hill and dropped off the cliff in a small waterfall to form the lake.

The lake emptied by way of a much smaller waterfall. It was above this small waterfall that Ma would sit in an old Adirondack chair Pa had made when they were first married. Ma would sit in that old chair full of cushions and prop her feet up on an old nail barrel while she read, fished and napped the day away. She was getting too old now to clean fish, so she put them in an old wash tub full of water until someone came by to clean the pan-sized ones and let the others go. There was always someone there to help, and it was usually Joe.

Pa had been dead for three years now but Ma still took her late morning walk along the

"Grownups like my father and aunt and uncle just drink and get loud and then go to sleep. That is dumb, don't you think? As far as I can see, all grownups are dumb."

stream above the lake. It was on one of these walks that she first met Joe. He was just a kid, busy catching crawfish to use as bait for the big fat brown trout in a nearby river. She watched him for a time before she let him know she was there.

She expected to startle him when she said, "I guess you didn't notice me standing up here."

"I saw you," he said, without looking at her. "I just figured that since you were not making any noise, you might not be as dumb as most grownups."

"Well, you have a mouth on you. So you think most grownups are dumb, do you?"

"The ones I know are. My father gets drunk and yells about nothing until he passes out. Now that's dumb. Sound dumb to you?"

"I see your point," Ma said.

"What about your mother?"

"My mother died when I was two, but my

sister does her best for my brothers and me. Grownups like my father and aunt and uncle just drink and get loud and then go to sleep. That is dumb, don't you think? As far as I can see, all grownups are dumb. The only reason I don't think you are dumb is because I don't know you."

Ma had to admit that if this was the total of his experiences with adults, his logic was sound. That was it for Ma. She decided right then and there to take Joe to raise. After all, she needed someone to raise just as badly as Joe needed to be guided by someone. From that moment on, the two were inseparable. It was not planned, it just happened that way.

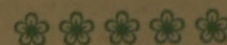
"Well, since you don't know me, why don't you wait and see before you condemn me as being 'dumb' also. I just might be smarter than you think."

Although Joe was strong-willed, he needed to be separated from his two older brothers, Peter and George. Ma had come along at just the right time to steer him down the right road.

Peter and George were already stealing liquor from their father and had been in trouble with the local sheriff for disorderly conduct. Both boys were under sixteen and it was a shame they did not listen. Everyone thought that they were headed down the same road as their father. A dead-end road. This saddened everyone because the boys were not even in high school yet.

With Ma's help, Joe graduated from high school. He was already a good carpenter and was not interested in going to college. Two

years later Joe married his high school sweetheart and eventually had a couple of kids. The kids called Ma "Grandma," and Joe's wife called her "Ma." Life was great.



One spring day it was reported in the local paper that Ma had sold a large piece of land to an out-of-town developer for over a million dollars. Needless to say, Ma acquired friends she never knew she had. Although she and Joe knew what was causing her new-found popularity, Ma didn't care because she was getting to see more kids, and Ma loved kids. She believed that having young people around kept her from getting old before her time. Joe agreed with her.

Ma's good fortune turned out to be an aggravation for Joe. Joe's brothers, who had not changed, took to teasing him about Ma's money. They knew how close Ma and Joe were. They started saying things like, "Hey brother! When Ma dies, are you going to give us some of that money? You wouldn't keep it all for yourself, would you?" Joe paid no attention to them; he knew that Ma still had a sister who lived in Kentucky. She would inherit everything, and besides, he didn't want anything except for an old handmade flyrod and the Adirondack chair.

There was an Indian summer that year, so fall did not arrive until almost November; so Ma sat



outside every day until late in the day and fished. She loved this unseasonable warmth. It allowed her to spend the afternoons with the kids until Joe came by on his way home from work.

Ma always insisted that Joe go to church with her on Sundays. They went to a different church every week and when they had gone to all of them in the valley, they started over again. She was fond of telling Joe that if he would trust in

"You have to have faith in the Lord and in the human spirit. That is one of the things that Pa used to say. If you believe in those two things, things will work out for the best," she would say.

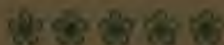
the Lord, everything would turn out for the best. Although Joe believed her, he didn't quite understand her abiding faith.

"You have to have faith in the Lord and in the human spirit. That is one of the things that Pa used to say. If you believe in those two things, things will work out for the best," she would say.

The pastor of one of those churches came by twice a week to spend the afternoon with Ma. I always wondered if he didn't enjoy the visits more than Ma. You see, he liked to fish just as much as Ma did, and he always left with a good-sized stringer of rainbows. Everyone knew that the best fishing in the valley was in Ma's lake.

Fall's weather did not last for very long and

winter came on to Ma's place an unwelcome sight. Winter forced Ma indoors, and being inside seemed to wear badly on her health. This hurt Joe, but there was nothing he could do about it.



Joe came by every afternoon after work to visit and make sure that there was enough dry firewood to keep Ma's woodstove going all night. Then one day, when Joe was bringing firewood into the house, Ma sat him down for a serious talk. Joe was immediately suspecting something was wrong. Ma had never looked quite this serious before.

Despite Joe's uneasiness, Ma seemed calm. This only served to make him even more nervous. As Joe sat down, Ma said, "Joe, you know that I am well into my nineties now, and I have done almost everything that I wanted to do in this life. I miss Pa more and more every day now and I believe that we should and will be together very soon. Everything will be fine — you'll see."

That was Friday afternoon. Ma died that night.

The funeral was to be held Sunday afternoon after church when the will was to be read. Everyone for miles around came to see if they had been mentioned in Ma's will. That million dollars was still fresh in everyone's mind, so there was a large crowd at Ma's house. Some of

the people there were telling each other about how much they had loved Ma. Others were saying things about how they had helped her over the years. Joe wanted to speak out at some of the lies he was hearing, but he knew Ma would not approve, so he kept silent.



As it turned out, Ma had an estate larger than anyone, including Joe, had thought. There was a large block of blue chip stocks, some bonds and several large pieces of land. These were left to five churches, two charities and the local school board.

You could almost see the disappointment on the faces of the adults. What everybody had been waiting for, the million dollars, had yet to be mentioned. The house and the twenty-five acres it sat on were almost forgotten. The money was what the people wanted to hear about.

Joe was leaning against one of the giant hemlocks by the end of the front porch when the lawyer started to read the last part of Ma's will. As the lawyer listed the final items in Ma's will, Joe looked out over the crowd at the faces covered with avarice.

All of a sudden, there was silence. It finally struck Joe that everyone was looking at him. The lawyer was looking at the assemblage and repeating Joe's name. Joe thought that it was for the flyrod and the Adirondack chair that Pa had made.

It turned out, there was no sister in Kentucky. Ma had left everything to Joe. The end of the will stated that Ma knew Joe would use the money wisely and fairly. And she wanted him to live in the house.

Joe did both. Ma died happy in the knowledge that Joe had faith in God and in the human spirit.

Michael Miller is a 50-year-old writer who lives in Atlanta, Georgia.



Feature

Is the faith personal or corporal?

Trouble in the Church: Part 1

Rev. Bernard H. De Jonge

A recent issue of *Canadian Geographic* carried a very interesting story about the work of some Canadian geophysicists studying the earth's crust. They were looking for what lies below the surface of the country of Canada — for fault lines, points of stress and different types of rock formations that lie below that which we see and walk on.

The land we walk on and the country we drive over may look solid and uniform enough. It

rocket science (or earth science!) to know what is at work in the geology of the church, to uncover points of stress. Anyone who stays informed of the church's activities and is aware of decisions made by church leaders over the last years can easily recognize that there are some powerful forces at work beneath the surface of the Christian church.

Church designed by God

One stress point that we perceive in the forces at work in the

This image of the tectonic forces beneath earth's crust seems to me an apt metaphor for the geography of the Church of Jesus Christ.

goes from forest to prairie, mountain to coast land, but underneath this surface stability there are huge forces — tectonic forces — bringing pressure points that cause upheaval, erosion, earthquakes and more.

This image of the tectonic forces beneath earth's crust seems to me an apt metaphor for the geography of the Church of Jesus Christ. On paper, in confession and in print, the church looks solid and organized enough. Underneath the surface, behind the scenes, however, there are large forces at work: ideas, mind-sets — "tectonic forces" — that also cause "earthquakes," chasms, upheaval and erosion.

Geologists use a high degree of sophisticated technology used to find what lies below the earth's surface. They use vibrating platforms, huge trucks that pound the earth at 14-second intervals, and sound waves to interpret what lies below the surface.

For a church member, however, it does not take a degree in

Christian church, and the Christian Reformed Church in particular, has to do with two views of the church. The first of these views sees the church as an exclusive design of God. It is a work of the Holy Spirit, a gift of God to his followers. The *Heidelberg Catechism* (Q & A.54) speaks of this "holy catholic church" as a creation of the Spirit of God and the Word of God, "out of the entire human race." It is "gathered, protected and preserved, a community chosen for eternal life." It is a creation of God, a sanctuary for the faith of believers. It is here in this sanctuary of believers that there is a sharing in Christ.

Q & A. 55 says "that believers one and all, as members of this community, share in Christ, and in all his treasures and gifts." Moreover, they should do this "readily and cheerfully for the service and enrichment of the other members." This is a vision of a family of God, a community of believers that enriches and builds up itself.

Furthermore, the *Belgic*

Confession makes this vision even more specific. In Article 28 it says: "This holy assembly and congregation is the gathering of those who are saved and there is no salvation apart from" the church. What is more, "No one ought to withdraw from it, content to be by himself, regardless of his status or condition." All these ideas convey this conviction that to be Christian is to be a church member, and in the church we nurture and preserve the faith. The roots of these statements in the confession and catechism are in Scripture. From these roots we establish that there is no Christian faith except that which connects umbilically to the church, as an unborn baby

connects umbilically to its mother.

Just as earth's crust is made up of continental plates, we can liken this vision to one theological "plate" under the church's surface.

Church not a mother

However, there is another "plate" beneath the surface, one that locates faith and faith development inside the individual. It sees the church only as an aid, if necessary, for spiritual development. In such a viewpoint, what is pre-eminent is one's individual relationship to God; and it matters less what church one belongs to, or for that matter,

whether one belongs to any church at all. The church is not the mother of believers, nor its nursery. For some Christians, the church may be an encumbrance, a hindrance, to an effective, wondrous relationship between themselves and God.

These two theological plates are rubbing up against each other beneath the surface causing friction, tension and upheaval.

How shall we detect some evidence of these stress flash points?

Two sides to profession

Just as earth's continental plates rub up against each other causing earthquakes, so we can



detect "church-quakes" as these two plates bump into each other. Over the last years, in my observations of the work of Reformed churches, one stress point is public profession of faith. In the Christian Reformed Church, public profession of faith has always had a two-sided focus. First, the profession is a public, responsible, singular ownership of a personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

It is the other half of the covenant ceremony linked with baptism. In baptism it is God who says to the child, "You are mine." In public profession of faith, it is the child who says to God, "I am yours, and I will own you as my Savior and my

— a public ownership of these beliefs and truths that we share with others in the church. In public profession of faith our personal relationship to Jesus is publicly shared and we "own" a responsibility to the rest of the Body of Christ.

Focus on personal relationships

These days, two theological plates are rubbing up against each other in public profession of faith. A stress point emerges when we separate the two ideas of what public profession of faith is. There is now a growing conviction that public profession of faith is primarily an expression of a personal faith. There-

a continuation of the faith found in that community of believers.

No-label churches

A second flash point where stress is building toward a "churchquake" is, in a feature of North American Christianity found nowhere else in the world. There are places of Christian worship, perhaps near you, that have no denominational label. They are simply called "Christian worship centre." Such a "centre" may have the name of the town as part of the name, but it has no further label. It observes no denominational distinction. There is a service of "praise and worship" that emphasizes no denominational particularity, except the experience of a claimed relationship with Jesus Christ.

Such "worship centres" are filled with people in very sincere Christian worship, but the members come from churches across the denominational spectrum. What this conveys in worship is that denominational labels are meaningless and pointless in our multicultural age. In these worship centres you have Christians who were born, raised and schooled in particular denominations and who now can, without too much difficulty, forsake the church of their youth.

What matters in these non-denominational worship centres is this special relationship to God. In effect, one church is as good as an other. As a consequence, it is easy to join and leave such churches since the emphasis is on the specific quest for personal faith fulfilment. Essentially, faith is your own intimate business; it's something between you and God, and we in this worship centre are just here to help you in your personal faith journey.

Shared and private

These are just two flash points of two theological plates rubbing up against each other. The one plate that says your faith is

your own private business, take it where you will, the other plate that says your faith is a shared faith and others also own it, making you accountable and responsible to and for others in your church.

It is my conviction that church membership is significant. It is important as much as it is important to know your own national identity.

beliefs, moods, thoughts and feelings of the body of believers that has given them birth.

You use the church to shape your faith, but you also realize that the church is shaping you, and you must accommodate to the church. The church's creeds and confessions join the truth of Scripture, so that through the church we display the manifold wisdom of God. We CRC mem-

In the desire to publicly profess one's faith there is a pre-eminent focus on the relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing what it means to be a part of the community of believers is minimally emphasized.

Lord." It is the declaration of a distinctive point of conversation. It is a public decision for Jesus that everyone and all may acknowledge.

We expect, therefore, traditionally in the Christian Reformed Church, that in public profession of faith persons have a heart-felt conviction (we call it heart knowledge) concerning Jesus Christ. It is a knowledge of sin, of salvation and of service; an awareness of the person of Jesus, his work of crucifixion and resurrection, the declaration of the Kingdom.

There is another side to profession of faith; that is, a decision to acknowledge a public, responsible "ownership" of the life of the church, to participate as an adult in the body of believers. For this other half of public profession of faith we also expect there to be a knowledge of the church. A knowledge of the body of believers, its history, its mission, its teaching, its dogmas, its rules

fore, public profession of faith can occur, and does frequently occur, with believers hardly aware of the distinctive beliefs, practices and history of the institution and community of believers they are joining.

In the desire to publicly profess one's faith there is a pre-eminent focus on the relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Knowing what it means to be a part of the community of believers is minimally emphasized. Profession of faith is professing Jesus, and it is not so critical to indicate which church you are joining.

It strikes me that the church must preserve the historical vision of public profession of faith as a public profession of a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But professing one's faith is also a public ownership of life in the church of believers. Believers must know their church's history, practices and doctrines so that they can be responsible members and exhibit



CC: TUL

To be a Christian is to be a church member, participating in the life of the church throughout the years — just as being married means you live with your spouse day in, day out, year in, year out, working through the good, working through the bad. As marriage partners learn from each other, they know each other's history, moods, thoughts and feelings, and thereby build a Christian love and trust.

So too, Christians are members of a family of God. They learn that family's history.

bers share the conviction that we are both Christian and Christian Reformed. We acknowledge the Lord Jesus Christ as King of heaven and earth, as our complete Savior, God and Lord. We are loyal and responsible to and for each other, in spite of the disagreements. We are loyal both to Christ and his church which he loved and died for — his bride.

Bernard De Jonge is pastor of the Anglican Chr. Ref. Church in Annapolis, Ont.

Opinion

Peter and Marja

are
IN**Don't
denigrate
diversity in
the church**

Dear P & M:

My wife brought home a book from the library entitled *All of Baba's Children*. It is by

a third generation Ukrainian-Canadian, Myrna Kostush. In it, Ms. Kostush recounts the immigrant experiences of her people, experiences to which Dutch immigrants can readily relate.

Our little language problems in the kitchens of our churches and Christian schools are minor when compared to the difficulties faced by other nationalities. As Dutch immigrants we took to our new language quickly, some of us becoming almost more English than the Brits. Some 50 years after immigration we find our second and third generations well established economically. This may be due, in large measure, to the fact that we missed the Depression years and the times of drought which challenged earlier immigrants.

So let's celebrate whatever multiculturalism there is in the church. Don't let it be an irritant but a cause for pentecostal joy, the kind of joy which sees people from many nations and tongues rejoicing because of the risen Savior and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Under the blessing of Pentecost we can ask each other, "Where are you going?" rather than "Where are you from?" But when the curse of Babel makes us irritable with our diversity, we must learn to understand each other. Don't demand that our language be the only permissible one. That's something the Bible League understands well. So use some common sense and lots of salt. Let's laugh at our own peculiarities and traits. Taking those things too seriously does more harm than good.

Dear Lighten Up:

Your letter celebrates Canada's multiculturalism, reminds us that all immigrants have their versions of the Dutch experience, and challenges us to lighten up. We like your upbeat and positive attitude about Dutch culture and heritage.

You correctly point out that Dutch post-war immigrants have assimilated well into Canadian society. As Northern Europeans they understood the English culture; as WWII survivors they loved their Canadian rescuers. No wonder they took to their new land as well as they did!

We worry, however, about those races and nationalities whose traditions, religion, language and experience is completely unlike Canada's dominant culture. They will have a much harder time fitting in. As Christians we must reach out with the kind of welcome and acceptance that Christ extended to all.

In the meantime, you have our promise that we'll lighten up about the Dutchisms that surface in our kitchens. But do we have your promise that you will be sensitive to those who might mistakenly conclude that the Reformed churches can be spiritual homes only to those whose names begin with "van" or know the meaning of the word "dockie"?

Write to: P & M, 16 Kimbermount Drive, St. Catharines, ON L2N 5V6.

Peter and Marja Sluiter are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidka, Alan Vandermaas, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

Getting help

Walter E. Grouwen

A major challenge for those who are suffering from mental illness and for their families is to find help. Although psychiatric care is available in some communities, and needing it does not have the stigma it once did, finding the right kind of help can be difficult.

Often help is first sought when a crisis occurs. The first destination is the emergency department of a hospital. If there is time for reflection, a name may be picked out of a telephone listing of psychiatrists, or the family doctor may make a referral. Often people put more care into choosing tomatoes in the grocery store than in finding a good doctor or counsellor.

The reason is partly explained by another myth: doctors or qualified counsellors must know what they are doing! But professional people are only human. As in every area of the working world, some people are better at the theoretical level than they are in practice. Even an intellectually gifted person is not always skilled at working with people.

A person, not just a case

It is essential to recognize that the counselling/therapy relationship is first and foremost a relationship between two people — the professional helper (a stranger) and the patient or client. The most important tool any helping professional has in the non-physical branch of health care is him- or herself.

Some professionals treat people as cases — cold, clinically, and usually ineffectively. However, a counselling situation requires mutual trust and accep-

ance, and love and maturity in the helper. I was impressed by the integrity of Dr. Norman White, head of the McMaster University psychiatry outpatient clinic in Hamilton when he admitted on Channel 11 some years ago that some of his colleagues discriminate against their patients, that is, they have little respect or hope for them.

Such doctors are inclined to remain aloof from their patients, to prescribe medications and not work through the difficult issues a patient faces.

Respect needed for a client's faith

There are also doctors who will, against their code of ethics, interfere in the client's belief systems. Some believe Christianity, or religion in general, causes mental illness. And if the patient is a Christian, the professional helper may tempt him or her away from the faith which seems to cause so much trouble.

This is the great risk for Christians who need help. If they have emotional/mental problems the illness will often take on religious manifestations. The patient may have a lot of things to work through, including anger at God for letting this illness befall them.

Some anti-Christian doctors are respectful and try to help the client through this as best they can. But they don't really understand the patient's faith. Some years ago when I needed help, I believed my doctor would be well able to give it because he was reputed to be a brilliant psychiatrist. But after eight months of weekly counselling he threw up his hands and declared, "Wally I can't help you. All you talk about is God." I am a Christian, he is not. He referred me to someone else.

The importance of getting the right help, then, is crucial. Some people (many Christian doctors included) claim there is no such thing as Christian psychiatry. I disagree. Experience tells me there is, because the process is not mechanical, it is relational. Vital in that relationship are values and beliefs which are part of a person's character and way of life. These are among the basic "tools" with which a professional and client must work. To do so they must understand each other.

Wally Grouwen is a certified pastoral counsellor who lives in Dundas, Ont.

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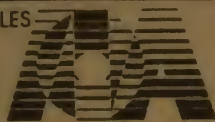


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<p>(Revised February 1, 1996)</p> <p>Births \$25.00</p> <p>Marriages & Engagements \$40.00</p> <p>Anniversaries \$45.00</p> <p>2 column anniversaries \$90.00</p> <p>Obituaries \$45.00</p> <p>Notes of thanks \$35.00</p> <p>Birthdays \$40.00</p> <p>All other one-column classified advertisements \$15.00 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is \$15.00. Letter under file number \$35.00. Photos \$25.00 additional charge.</p> <p>Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive.</p> <p>ATTENTION:</p> <p>a) Christian Courier reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.</p> <p>b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is not acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.</p> <p>c) Photographs sent by fax are not acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.</p> <p>d) Christian Courier will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or photo-in advertisements.</p> <p>e) The rate shown above for obituaries covers any length up to five column inches. Christian Courier reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of \$15.00 per column inch (GST incl.).</p> <p>NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS</p> <p>We offer a one-year subscription for only \$25.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the <i>Christian Courier</i> and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose \$25.00 and the couple's correct address.</p> <p>Christian Courier 4-261 Martindale Rd. St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1 Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313</p>	<p>WORINGA:</p> <p>We like to thank our children and grandchildren for an unforgettable day on July 20, 1996. They put it all together. Thank you family and friends who came out to celebrate with us our 40th wedding anniversary. Thanks for all the phone calls, gifts, flowers, cards and all the good wishes. We thank above all our Lord, who made this day. The Lord was with us in the past, we pray He'll be with us in the future. Great is His faithfulness.</p> <p>Henk and Betty Woringa</p>	 <p>BOWMAN:</p> <p>"Great is Thy faithfulness."</p> <p>Eric and Kimberly (nee Donnelly) are happy to announce that they were blessed with a daughter</p> <p>SAMANTHA LYNN</p> <p>on July 25, 1996, weighing 8 lbs. 2 oz.</p> <p>"Oma" Grace Bowman also enjoys this second granddaughter, a special gift from our faithful Lord.</p> <p>Other proud grandparents are Wayne and Dorothy Donnelly of Orangeville, Ont., and Harry Bowman of St. Catharines, Ont.</p> <p>Address: 44 South Dr., St. Catharines, ON L2R 4V2</p>	<p>1950 August 31 1996</p> <p>DICK and HENNE BOERMA (nee BIKEMA)</p> <p>With thankfulness to God, we are happy to announce our parents' and grandparents' 40th wedding anniversary.</p> <p>Richard Boerma — Norval, Ont. Ken Boerma — Norval, Ont. Ed & Bonnie Boerma — Utterson, Ont.</p> <p>Daniel Knety Mike & Gerdie Roberts — Brampton, Ont.</p> <p>Brandon, Helena, Kim-Anne David & Nadia Boerma — Bolton, Ont.</p> <p>We hope to celebrate together as family and friends on Saturday, Aug. 31, 1996, with an open house from 2-5 p.m., at our parents' home. Best wishes only please.</p> <p>Home address: 9563 Winston Churchill Blvd., R.R. #2, Norval, ON L0P 1K0</p>	<p>Samia Ingersoll 1948 1996</p> <p>"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us but in your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness" (Ps 115:1).</p> <p>On Aug. 17, 1996, we will celebrate the blessing of 50 years of marriage of our parents and grandparents.</p> <p>REV. JAMES JOOSSE and LENA (ESSER) JOOSSE</p> <p>We are overwhelmed by the love, joy and health God has given them as they have been a great blessing and faithful examples to us and many others.</p> <p>With love from:</p> <p>John & Yelty (Adema) Joshua & Angie, Angela, Sara, Eva Ivan & Verna (Vandermeer) Darryl, Karen James Jr. & Alice (Vandermeer) Paul, Katherine Jan & Marilyn (VanderBerg) Bradley, Melinda, Ashley, Glenda (Gibert) Franklin David & Yvonne (DeVries) Krislin, Daniel, Brian Address: 298A Oxford St., Ingersoll, ON N5C 2W1</p>
	<p>Marriages</p>			
	<p>GRIFFIOEN/VELTMAN:</p>  <p><i>Congratulations to Jake and Sara who will be married on Aug. 17, 1996</i></p> <p>Mr. and Mrs. Jake and Audrey Griffioen and Mr. and Mrs. Al and Lone Veltman are pleased to announce the marriage of their son and daughter</p> <p>JAKE and SARA</p> <p>Knowing the Lord has brought them together the ceremony will take place, D.V., on Saturday, Aug. 17, 1996, at 2:30 p.m., in the Lindsay Chr. Ref. Church, Lindsay, Ont., Pastor Karl House officiating.</p> <p>Future address: 305 Elmwood St., Apt #1, Kingston, ON K7M 2Y9</p>	<p>HANENBURG:</p> <p>Jeff, Judi (Weverink) and Katie are excited to announce, with joy and thanksgiving to our Father in heaven, the safe arrival of our new daughter and baby sister</p> <p>JANELLE MARILYN</p> <p>She was born on July 16, 1996, at 7:15 p.m., weighing in at 7 lbs., 2 1/2 oz.</p> <p>She is the 24th grandchild of Martin and Nell Weverink of Aylmer, Ont., and the 10th grandchild of Bill and Cobie Hanenburg of Innerkip, Ont.</p> <p>"Every good and perfect gift is from above" (James 1:17)</p>	<p>1951 1996</p> <p>With praise and thanksgiving to God we wish to announce the 45th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents</p> <p>RUDY and JANTJE HUFTE (nee MOEBKER)</p> <p>We thank God for His faithfulness and pray for His continued blessings in the years to come.</p> <p>Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren:</p> <p>John & Marc Huffen — Orillia, Ont. Rudy Mathias, Emily John & Janet Veerman — Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. James, Christina, Jonathan Fred & Suzanne Huffen — Orillia, Ont.</p> <p>Robert, Scott, Heidi, Chloe, Simon, Sophie Mark & Joyce Shelswell — Pentton, B.C.</p> <p>Sheldon, Marshall, Mitchell George & Linda Oudyk — Oshawa, Ont.</p> <p>Michael, Jordan</p> <p>We invite you to share with us in celebrating this special occasion at an open house on Saturday, Aug. 24, 1996, from 2-5 p.m., in the Fellowship Hall of the Chr. Ref. Church, 50 Fittens Rd. W., Orillia, Ont.</p> <p>Your presence will be considered your gift.</p> <p>Home address: 391 Bay St., Orillia, ON L3V 3X5</p>	<p>Fruiland Winona, Ont. Ont. 1950 August 3 1996</p> <p>"For the Lord God is a sun and shield" (Ps 84:11a).</p> <p>With thankfulness to the Lord we celebrated the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents and grandparents.</p> <p>ARENDINA (DIANA) KRUIZINGA and JOHN VANDERSTOEPE</p> <p>With love and congratulations from your children and grandchildren:</p> <p>Ingrid & Ron Halliday — Grimsby Melanie, Michael, Bradley Shirley & Al Hannah — Winona Matthew, Melissa Carl & Doreen VanderStoep — Winona Arlana, Victoria, André Belinda & Derek Klunder — Cassler Centre Rachel, Chantel Address: 1445 Hwy #11, Winona, ON L8E 5K9</p>
	<p>Personal</p>	<p>Anniversaries</p>		
	<p>ONE TO ANOTHER</p> <p>Christian companion magazine. Hundreds of readers Canada-wide. Single issue \$5.</p> <p>Write to:</p> <p>#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S. Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2</p>	<p>Charlottetown Blackstock P.E.I. Ont. 1956 August 28 1996</p> <p>With thanks to God, we announce the 40th wedding anniversary of our parents</p> <p>WILLIAM and TANYA DEURWAARDER (nee BOELHOUWER)</p> <p>We pray for continued blessings in the years to come. Congratulations and love from your children and grandchildren.</p> <p>Ella & Jim Balkwill — Drumbo, Ont. Nick, Tony, Daniel Ed & Lynda Deurwaarder — View Lake, Ont. Natasha, Alyssa, Derek Diana & Gerald Klingenberg — Innerkip, Ont. Rachel, Jennifer Wayne Deurwaarder — Blackstock, Ont.</p> <p>We plan to have an open house on August 25, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at their home.</p> <p>Home address: 4 Greensboro Dr., Box 282, Blackstock, ON L0B 1B0</p>	<p>Personal</p>	
<p>ATTENTION!</p> <p>When you fax your display or classified ads to us (particularly obituaries), please type them and check spelling <i>BEFORE</i> you transmit the text.</p> <p>Thank You.</p>				<p>Teachers</p> <p>ORILLIA, Ont.: Elementary teacher sought. Possible part-time, leading to full-time position, at the junior/intermediate level. Only those granted interviews will be contacted. Please send resumes to:</p> <p>Orillia Chr. School Att. Principal P.O. Box 862 Orillia, ON L3V 1G6</p>

Classifieds

Anniversaries	Obituaries	Vacations	Job Opportunities
 <p>1956 August 22 1996 Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace" (Col.3:15a).</p> <p>JOHN and ALI WOULDSTRA (nee MEYERINK)</p> <p>together with their children and grandchildren, hope to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary on Aug. 22, 1996.</p> <p>We praise our God and heavenly Father for his faithfulness to us and our children during these 40 years.</p> <p>Irene & Ed VanderVeen — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Danielle, Natalie, John, Meagan, Patrick</p> <p>Margaret & Jim Rietveld — Sherwood Park, Alta.</p> <p>James, Colin, Erica</p> <p>Martin & Frances Woudstra — Sherwood Park, Alta.</p> <p>Derek, Nadine, Craig, Angela, Thomas</p> <p>Fred Woudstra & Carolyn Opendries — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Brian & Marie Woudstra — Iringa, Tanzania</p> <p>Joel, Lisa</p> <p>Helen & Blaise MacMullin — Nanaimo, B.C.</p> <p>Brenda & David Paszek — Edmonton, Alta.</p> <p>Alicea, Anton</p> <p>Relatives and friends are invited to celebrate with us at an open house on Saturday, Aug. 24, 1996, from 2-4 p.m., at the ACT Recreation Centre in Rundle Park, Edmonton. Best wishes only.</p> <p>Home address: 4234-117 Avenue, Edmonton, AB T5W 0Y4</p>	<p>Dec. 13, 1908 - July 19, 1996</p> <p>"My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth" (Ps.121:2). On July 19, 1996, the Lord took home our beloved father, grandfather and great-grandfather</p> <p>HENRY MARISSSEN</p> <p>Beloved husband of the late Tina Marissen (1981).</p> <p>Sadly missed by his children: Ann & Dennis Zylstra — Kagawong</p> <p>Roland & Vera Marissen — St. Thomas</p> <p>Jeany & Kees Kaptein — London</p> <p>Harry & Janet Marissen — Belleville</p> <p>Henry & Reinie Marissen — Merlin</p> <p>Tina & Norman Jones — Aylmer</p> <p>Dear Opa to his 25 grandchildren and 25 great-grandchildren.</p> <p>Dear brother of Teunis Marissen, Engeltje Oldewening, and Antje Hulst, Aylmer, Ont. and Harm Marissen and Fennechien Oldengarm of the Netherlands.</p> <p>Predeceased by three sisters and three brothers.</p> <p>The funeral service took place on Monday, July 22, 1996, at the First Chr. Ref. Church in St. Thomas, Ont., Rev. John Heidinga officiating. Interment at Elmdale Memorial Park.</p> <p>Correspondence address: K. Kaptein, 1191 Melsandra Ave., London, ON N5Y 4P1</p>	<p>BERGENTHEIM TE HUUR VOOR VAKANTIE:</p> <p>Moderne gemeubileerde woning (modern furnished home) — per week of per maand — in Bergen-theim, Overijssel (ongeveer 12 km van Ommen).</p> <p>Voor volledige informatie bel of schrijf naar:</p> <p>J. Snijders 651-4 Ave. E. Brooks, AB T1R 0H4 Phone: (403) 362-4052 or (403) 362-2653</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p> </p> <p>Toronto 416-224-5211 Toll-Free (Canada wide) 1-800-667-2525 Fax 416-224-0842 Grimsby 905-945-3301 Burlington 905-522-8602 Emergency Service Available Business & Vacation Travel</p> <p>Interested in placing an ad? Get in touch with us for details.</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p>	<p>Seeking a Pastor</p> <p>Fellowship Chr. Ref. Church in Brighton, Ont., located on the north shore of Lake Ontario, is seeking a pastor to minister to a congregation of 115 families and 50 singles. We are a diverse community of believers committed to glorifying God in worship. We seek leadership committed to Bible-based preaching and teaching, pastoral care and supportive fellowship. This pastor should embrace our vision for growth, equip believers for faithful service, and share Jesus with our community and world. If you feel that God may be calling you to such a challenge, please send inquiry and/or profile to:</p> <p>Stuart Couperus, R.R. #3, Brighton, ON K0K 1H0. Phone: (613) 475-3717 or Fax: (613) 966-1252.</p> <p>Miscellaneous</p> <p> We love early birds!</p> <p>Renew your CC subscription now!</p> <p>Our Circulation Manager is at her job every day trying to keep our subscriptions up to date. We spend thousands of dollars each year in postage sending out renewal notices, reminders, etc. To top it off, Canada Post charges us an extra fee for using the handy business-reply envelopes we make available. This means that in order to get a subscription renewed we have to pay close to \$1.00 in postage alone!</p> <p>The computer label on your <i>Christian Courier</i> copy shows the month in which your subscription is due. If your label shows that your subscription is due two or three months from now, kindly consider sending us the renewal fee ahead of time. This way, you will be assured that C.C. will be coming to you regularly, as well as saving us time and postage expenses!</p> <p>Be an early bird! We appreciate your co-operation. Please use the coupon below when sending us your renewal fee.</p>
<p>For Rent</p> <p>For rent: 2 bedr., 1350 sq. ft. apartment on lower level of 10-year-old home. Located on 3/4 acre property, on Chr. school busroutes, convenient to Hamilton, Cambridge, or for commuters (40 min. to Toronto airport). \$725 per month, incl. utilities.</p> <p>Contact Ray Pennings at (905) 659-0389</p> <p>For rent: Toronto. Basement apartment available immediately, separate entrance, off street parking, air conditioning, close to TTC. \$500 per month.</p> <p>Contact (416) 245-6240</p> <p>UWO Students: furnished, bachelor basement apartment in family home. Private bath. Walk to university. Very good for student.</p> <p>Phone (519) 438-1242</p>	<p>For Rent</p> <p>For Rent: New apartment in country setting. One bedroom. Within 1/2 hour of Toronto, 5 min. to CRC church. \$600 per month + utilities. Laundry and appliances Available immediately.</p> <p>Call (905) 939-7363</p> <p>Accommodation</p> <p>Attention McMaster Students! 3-Bedr. furnished apartment. Suitable for 2 or 3 females. With security, close to bus, 15 min. from campus. Must be Christian, non-smoker. Have references ready regarding cleanliness and carefulness; even from mother will do.</p> <p>Call (905) 525-8268</p> <p>Church News</p> <p>Christian Reformed Church</p> <p>New clerk: — Covenant CRC, Edmonton: Harry Schuld. Contact at the church's address: 8810 Meadowlark Rd., Edmonton, AB T5R 5W6; (403) 483-6157; or via e-mail: harschu@freenet.edmonton.ab.ca</p>	<p>CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS NEED CHRISTIAN TEXTBOOKS</p> <p>The CCEF supports the cost of developing Christian textbooks for your local school.</p> <p>Your financial support will help us in our publishing program. Your gifts are tax deductible.</p> <p>CANADIAN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.</p> <p></p> <p>Fred R. Vander Velde Executive Director</p> <p>2621 Cavendish Drive Burlington, ON L7P 3W6 (905) 336-5619, day or evening.</p>	<p>COUPON</p> <p>Please renew my C.C. subscription for the period indicated:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> one-year renewal. Enclosed is \$43.50 (\$35.00 U.S.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> two-year renewal. Enclosed is \$82.00 (\$66.00 U.S.)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> three-year renewal. Enclosed is \$123.00 (\$99.00 U.S.)</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City/Town _____</p> <p>Code _____</p> <p>P.S. If possible, glue your label in this space, or enclose it. Send to: 4-261 Martindale Road, St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1</p>

Classifieds

Miscellaneous	Events	Events	Events	Events
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Look for
our monthly
**Business
Directory**
on page 15...

Retirement Rev. Peter W. De Bruyne

After 34 years of ministry in the Chr. Ref. Church, Rev. Peter W. De Bruyne will be retiring as Chaplain of Shalom Manor. Family, friends and former parishioners are invited to attend an *Evening of Thanksgiving*, which will be held in honor of Rev. and Mrs. De Bruyne, at the Mountainview CRC, Grimsby, Ont., on **September 25, 1996**, at 7:30 p.m. Correspondence to be addressed to: **Nellie VanderVelde, 12 Bartlett Ave., Grimsby, ON L3M 4N5**

RETIREMENT Rev. John E. Top

Pastor Top hopes to retire **October 1, 1996**, as Minister of the Word and Sacraments at the Chr. Ref. Church, Mount Brydges, Ont. A former banker, he helped many Guelph-area immigrants who were eagerly seeking loans to start their farms. He enrolled at Calvin College during the fall of 1956. He subsequently served as either teacher or principal in Christian schools in Wyoming, Fruitland and Toronto, and at Hamilton District Christian High. In 1982, he entered the ministry in the Collingwood, Ont., CRC. In 1987, he accepted the call to Mount Brydges CRC. John married Hennie Markus in 1957 and the Lord blessed them with five children.

His farewell sermon will be preached, D.V., on **Sunday, August 25, 1996, at 3 p.m.**

We pray that the Lord will continue to bless John and Hennie and make them a blessing in their retirement years.

**The Council and Congregation
Mount Brydges CRC.**

Address Change

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for processing
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Mail to:
Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON
L2W 1A1

Miscellaneous



FOR SALE

Antique Dutch Wallclock
"FRIESE STAARTKLOK"
with alarm mechanism, dated approx. 1840

In good running order.

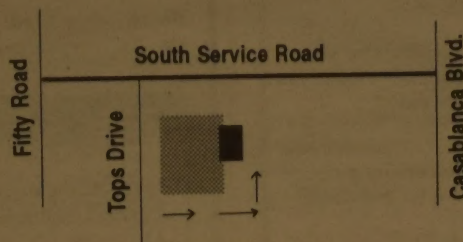
For information call:

Stekelbos Watch and Clock Repairs
Wallaceburg, Ont., (519) 627-4011

NEW **TOPS**
Wholesale Cash & Carry

Grand Opening
August 5, 1996!

623 South Service Road
Grimsby, Ont.
(in rear of building)



Cheese, groceries, candy,
chocolates, biscuits
at wholesale prices.

SAVE! SAVE! SAVE!

For Sale

FOR SALE



A Jubilee Fellowship CRC fundraising project.

Two brand-new, semi-detached homes, quality-built by Prinsen Homes in the Carlton/Vine area, St. Catharines, Ont.

Price per semi \$97,900 (net of G.S.T.)

Very unique design. Partially-finished basement with roughed-in bathroom. Abundance of closet space. Seven-year HUDAC warranty. Extra-deep lot. Close to all amenities. No land transfer tax and 5% down for first-time home buyers.

Call Ron Vahrmeyer (Frank Penner Real Estate) at (905) 646-3565 or Gary Prinsen at (905) 935-7690.

Classifieds

Events

Miscellaneous

REWARD

in the form of an enjoyable weekend

is being offered for the apprehension of former members of the **Young People Society of the First Chr. Ref. Church of Toronto, Ont.** To qualify one must have been a member between 1950-1959, and turn in him- or herself before the planned reunion this coming Labour Day weekend. Final registration deadline is August 12, 1996. For details call **John Cappon at (416) 225-7376** or **Jack Gehrels at (416) 225-5217**

What if one day you next week couldn't Speak?

Or maybe you couldn't walk. Or your vision was blurred. That's what it's like to live with multiple sclerosis, an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Things you take for granted can become impossible and you don't know when or where or if it will strike again. But the research and services programs of the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada are providing some answers. With your help, we can connect **Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada** with a cure. **1-800-288-7582**

Calendar of Events

Please submit only brief items. Placement is subject to space availability. Lengthy, multiple-event announcements will be rejected. We reserve the right to edit the material and to charge a nominal, per issue fee per item inserted.

- Aug. 15** Guelph Ligonier Seminar, 2-10 p.m., Parkview Pentecostal Church, 89 Speedvale Ave. E., **Guelph, Ont.** Theme: "The Holy Spirit and Revival." Speakers: Drs. Jonathan Gerstner, Michael Haykin and Neal Hegeman. Admission: \$20. Info.: 1-800-563-3529.
- Aug. 17** Toronto Ligonier Seminar, 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Trinity Presb. Church, corner Bayview & Hwy. 401, **Toronto, Ont.** Theme: "Holy Spirit and the Transformation of the Christian." Speakers: Drs. Mariano Di Gangi and Donald Carson. Admission \$20. Info.: 1-800-563-3529.
- Aug. 24-25** Service of ordination of Ruth Hofman, M.Div., on Sat. Aug. 24, at 7 p.m., First CRC of **Toronto**, 67 Taunton Road. Communion service Sun. Aug. 25, at 10 a.m. More information: (416) 766-9600 (Rosanne) or (416) 481-4912 (Church office). (#)
- Aug. 25** Dutch worship service led by Rev. Henry R. De Bolster, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.**
- Aug. 25** Rev. John E. Top, who will be retiring Oct. 1, will preach his farewell sermon, D.V., at 3 p.m., Chr. Ref. Church **Mount Brydges, Ont.** Info.: (519) 657-5259 (#).
- Aug. 31-Sept. 2** Reunion of the YPS, First CRC, **Toronto, Ont.**, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary. Info.: (416) 225-7376 or (416) 225-5217 (#).
- Sept. 14** LDCSS Alumni Picnic, 2-6 p.m. (rain or shine) at the school, **London, Ont.** Info.: (519) 455-4360 or fax: (519) 455-4364 (#)
- Sept. 28** "Praise and Worship Conference" with Grace and Colleen, First CRC, 310 Kingscourt Ave., **Kingston, Ont.** Info.: (613) 542-8350 or 389-5050.
- Oct. 6** Dutch worship service led by Rev. Jerry J. Hoytema, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.**
- Oct. 30-Nov. 2** "Free to Serve," celebrations will be held **Oct. 30:** Jubilee Auditorium, **Edmonton, Alta.**, and **Nov. 2:** Redeemer College Auditorium, **Ancaster, Ont.** For details, see ad in C.C., July 5/96. (#)
- Nov. 1** "Christian Festival Concert," by the choirs and brass of the Ontario Chr. Music Assembly, directed by Leendert Kooij. At 8 p.m., Roy Thomson Hall, **Toronto, Ont.** Also featuring Andre Knevel and Sander Van Marion (organ and piano) and Marjorie Ginczinger, soprano. A truly exciting event! Tickets/info.: (416) 636-9779 (#).
- Nov. 17** Dutch worship service led by Rev. Riemer Praamsma, 3 p.m., CRC, **Ancaster, Ont.**

Be prepared

(NC)—An emergency can happen any place, any time. With a little advance planning, you can be prepared for the unexpected. First, know what to do in an emergency—this means being trained in first aid. Second, make sure you have the materials you're going to need in any emergency—this means first aid kits.

First aid training

A good first aid course is the only way to learn the skills of first aid—and it is the skills that matter the most in an emergency. St. John Ambulance offers a wide variety of first aid courses—many of them are listed here. Why take a course from St. John Ambulance? St. John Ambulance first aid courses offer many advantages, including:

- Highly trained instructors—St. John Ambulance instructors must be certified through our *National Instructor Training and Development Programme*
- Proven training techniques—our emergency and standard first aid courses, for example, are presented through a careful mix of workbook exercises, video demonstrations, instructor demonstrations and practice sessions
- Flexible course content—many of our courses are based on the modular concept so you can choose the topics most suited to your needs
- National certification—a St. John Ambulance first aid certificate is recognized across Canada

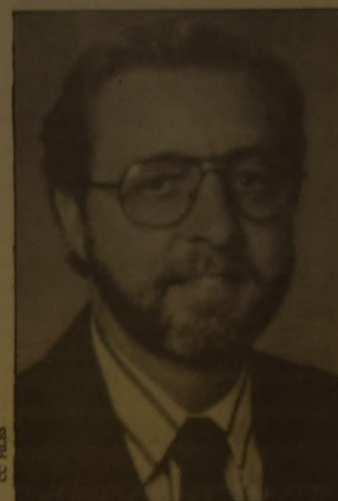
Supreme Court delays decision in Elgersma v. Attorney General

ANCASTER, Ont. (OACS) — Constitutional questions about Newfoundland's denominationally operated school systems have moved Canada's Supreme Court to delay its ruling on parental rights under the freedom of religion section of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Elgersma case argues that justice requires that independent schools receive government funding. Earlier indications suggested a decision in the case might have been forthcoming in May or June.

Although the issues in Newfoundland are different than those in Ontario, both deal with a mix of parents, government, funding, religion, schools and minority rights. One of the justices described the situation as "something like a spider's web. When you act on one part of it, you affect the whole thing." Since 1982, with the introduction of the Charter, the courts have played an expanding role in determining the benefits of democracy.

legality of the constitutional amendment.

"Even though we would like to see a quick decision in our case, we recognize the heightened importance of our position in Elgersma et al in keeping true freedom of religion



John Vanasselt

among the most basic of liberties," says Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools spokesperson John Vanasselt. "True freedom would have no penalties or burdens resulting from decisions made on religious grounds to fulfil legal obligations such as educating children. We are confident the court will agree."

How long a delay?

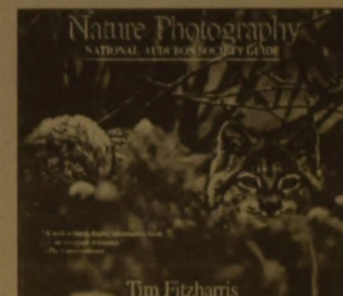
The Newfoundland issue may or may not be clarified in a short time. On the one hand, the provincial government has plans to get busy with the changes as soon as possible, but on the other, action may be delayed by churches challenging the

Nature photography as a window into your soul!

Nature Photography, A National Audubon Society Guide by Tim Fitzharris
Firefly Books, \$19.95

(NC)—The most complete guide to nature photography available. Photographer and author Tim Fitzharris' photographs are inspiring. He explains how the camera, like the painter's brush or the poet's pen, is a tool we can use to explore the planet. One of the world's finest nature photographers, Fitzharris shows the beginning and experienced nature photographers how to get photographs anyone will envy. *Nature Photography* is as much for the arm-chair reader as for photographers: the pictures are, without exception, stunning. This guide contains everything you'll need to know about equipment, basic and advanced techniques, composition, wildflowers, birds, landscapes, wildlife and insects. Fitzharris writes in a concise style,

with every possible scenario explored and explained. He begins each chapter with a short comment on the importance and validity of the ensuing information. His goal is to help us discover the majesty of nature and to "look through the lens with eyes wide open" so we "may be rewarded with a picture of our own soul."



Tim Fitzharris

News

The Orthodox Church played a role in the Russian election

Adrian Helleman

MOSCOW — Our apartment, located on the top floor of an eight-storey building, overlooks much of central Moscow. But for a tall building in the distance, our view would include



Boris Yeltsin: a surprise winner in Russia's presidential race

the golden domes of the Kremlin. This also aptly describes our view of the recent Russian elections. There is much that we can see, yet many things remain hidden. Let us, however, share several impressions.

When President Boris Yeltsin called the election in 1995, very few people expected him to win. According to polls conducted at the time, his popularity rating was in the single digits. Yet win he did on July 3, and with a decisive margin over his opponent, Gennady Zyuganov. One contributing factor largely ignored by the media was the role of the church.

Churches throughout the country prayed for the election. In churches we attended on the Sundays before the various elections, prayers were offered for an honest, peaceful election, and for stable, wise leadership. There was little more that most churches could do.

The role of the Russian Orthodox Church, which most clearly represents traditional religious interest, was not as circumspect. Both Yeltsin and Zyuganov courted the support of that church. Although neither man considers himself especially religious, both were shown visiting monasteries and churches. Zyuganov was so unsure of himself in one monastery that he touched the relics of a saint, earning the disapproval of the faithful who immediately

wiped the repository and removed the insult. Yeltsin, too, appears uncomfortable making the sign of the cross. But this did not prevent him from appearing on television with the head of the Orthodox Church, Patriarch Alexei II, at the end of the first stage of the campaign, thus contravening a rule against campaigning immediately before an election.

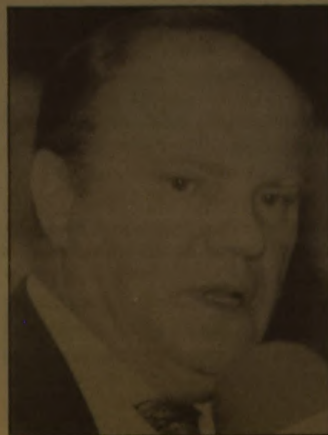
The Patriarch had announced his support of Yeltsin several weeks earlier. Of course, his endorsement is not supported by the entire Orthodox hierarchy. Some advocated voting for other candidates. One priest even told us of a colleague who advised his parishioners to vote for Zyuganov. Such endorsements are, in fact, contrary to the rules of the Russian Orthodox Church. Some years ago several priests who were elected as members of the Duma were defrocked for their involvement in politics. Needless to say, the rules are not always applied in an evenhanded manner.

Complex church/state relationship

We can only speculate about the patriarch's motivation. No doubt, the Orthodox Church shared the journalists' fear of a Communist victory. The relationship of church and state in Russia is a very complex matter,

much too difficult to explain in this brief report.

We will mention only one obvious symbol of that relationship: the Cathedral of Christ the Savior. Blown up by Stalin, it was replaced by a huge outdoor



Russian Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov acknowledges his defeat by Yeltsin

swimming pool. But with the strong encouragement of the mayor of Moscow, the church started rebuilding it last year. While the original took some 10 years to build, the first service was held in the new cathedral this past Easter. No one is willing to admit how much government money is being used for this project. The active involvement of the mayor of Moscow is

common knowledge. In fact, it has been described as his pet project. But neither church nor state is open about their respective roles in this venture.

If there is to be true healing in this country, both church and state will need to confess their complicity during the Soviet era. Stalin may have been responsible for closing many churches and turning them into museums and factories in the attempt to eradicate religion, but many Russian Orthodox leaders were known as agents of the KGB. Even current leaders have been implicated. Until there is public repentance it will be hard for many people to trust these leaders.

Current political leaders also have some confessions to make. Most of them are former Communists. In their case, they need to apologize for the destruction of churches and death of thousands, if not millions, of believers who perished. It has been estimated that the Soviet Union lost more than 27 million people in the period leading up to and during the Second World War.

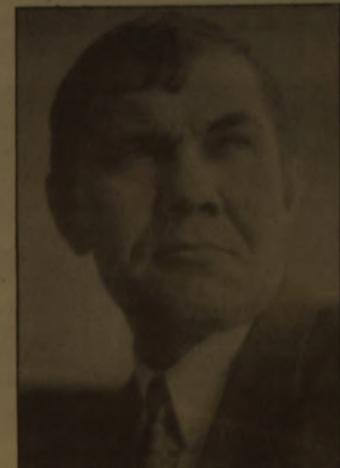
Both church and state must display the courage to face the past and take responsibility for their involvement in it. Unless they do, the bitterness evident in this election campaign will continue, and deep divisions will remain. Believers will need to take the initiative in this. "If my people, who are called by name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Exclusion and exhaustion

Although we could provide many examples of this bitterness and division, we will conclude with one instance. It comes from the closing days of the campaign, when Alexander Lebed made his infamous remarks about expulsion of unwanted elements, like Mormons and a Japanese sect. According to him, only three traditional religions of Russia, Russian Orthodoxy, Islam and Buddhism, should be recognized.

At a press conference in France, President Clinton mentioned how distasteful he found such remarks. In a televised

press release Lebed did make some attempt to apologize, but did not actually retract his words. A recent meeting of the Duma committee for church-state relations also mentioned the same triad of traditional



Late in the campaign, Alexander Lebed (above) called for expulsion of unwanted elements from Russia.

religions.

Both Roman Catholics and Protestants who were present objected to being excluded. Yet there was a rabbi who was asked to address the meeting. The issue of religious pluralism is far from settled.

It was an exciting election, but one that left many here quite exhausted. It is not the kind of event which should or could be repeated very often. One man in St. Petersburg, when asked on election day why he was out fishing when he had not yet voted, replied that he could vote anytime later that day, but for now he just wanted to rest and fish. He represents the attitude of many.

Zyuganov supporters were also angered by the results. One woman who was not surprised by Yeltsin's win, complained, "He controlled the media and the election commission." She accused Yeltsin's regime of being even more authoritarian than that of the Communists he so harshly criticized. Her complaint has some validity. Whether her accusation is also true, only time will tell.

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The Trinity Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Zagorsk, 80 km north of Moscow.